

OXFORD CITY LIBERAL DEMOCRATS MANIFESTO 2026

A vote for the Liberal Democrats in this May's City elections stands for:

A fairer Oxford: more affordable social housing, a sanctuary for refugees, and a co-ordinated approach to community infrastructure. The high-tech jobs boom shouldn't mean spiralling rents and choked roads.

A sustainable, open Oxford economy: we want a city open for business, trade, tourism and decent work. A city that values all its residents and is transparent in how it spends its money

A safer, cleaner Oxford: we will work towards zero road fatalities and injuries. We need improved enforcement of housing standards and proactive approaches to combat anti-social behaviour, and promote cleaner streets and cleaner air.

A healthier Oxford: we will work for our residents to create a more walkable and cyclable city for all; one that supports its communities through better public spaces for young and old alike.

A nature-positive and net-zero Oxford: the climate and nature emergency is right here, right now. We will work for a city where the environment is prioritised, where we mitigate the impacts of climate change that the city causes, as well as those caused to it.

A FAIRER OXFORD

We believe in the principle of fairness for all residents - we are one city and will work together so every neighbourhood has the community infrastructure it needs and everyone has decent housing, so we can all thrive. We will:

Strategic Planning

- Address spiralling rents and mortgages by ensuring new homes outpace new demand from commercial and other uses.
- Maximise social and intermediate affordable housing delivery.
- Support gentle densification on existing built footprint in preference to building on valued parks and green spaces within or outside the city.

- Where housing needs cannot be met by densification, support building immediately adjacent to the city over car-dependent development further afield.
- Review planning rules to encourage energy efficiency and carbon reduction, as well as how these interact with conservation area rules.
- Encourage employer-linked housing for those working in key sectors.
- Develop a strategic coordinated city-wide approach to community infrastructure investments, such as in healthcare facilities, community centres, and transportation infrastructure.

Council and Social Housing

- Build more council homes, to reduce the waiting list.
- Prefer directly council-managed social housing over Housing Association management.
- Review all Council owned blocks of flats for damp, mould and maintenance of exteriors and communal areas.
- Ensure council homes are fit to live in, and energy efficient.

Homelessness and Temporary Accommodation

- Get people out of unsuitable accommodation, like costly bed and breakfast sites, and into accommodation that works for them, long term.
- Promote homelessness prevention and work to help get people into a long term stable situation.

Housing Development

- Prioritise homes over commercial development.
- Use infill land and disused garage blocks to add to our housing stock. We will build creatively on infill land to create more homes.
- Underused car parks can be redeveloped to provide homes; we will work on making this a reality.

Community infrastructure

- Invest in upgrading run-down community centres, as they are the lifeblood of our city.

Empty Properties

- Take direct action to get long-term empty homes back into use, reactivate long-term vacant commercial or retail properties, and unblock development sites that have remained derelict for an excessively long period.

Taxation

- Maintain 100% relief from Council Tax for those on the lowest incomes through the Council Tax Reduction scheme.

City of Sanctuary

- Safeguard Oxford as a place for people of all faiths and none, town and gown, residents and newcomers. Our diversity is our strength.
- Stand up for Oxford's status as a city of sanctuary for refugees.
- Celebrate our city's remarkable diversity.

Culture

- Support more free access to the Museum of Oxford (MOX) entry to Oxford residents.

A SUSTAINABLE, OPEN OXFORD ECONOMY

An open economy that accounts for the social and environmental impacts of business is a sustainable economy. We will:

Back Oxford's Businesses

- Support small and medium-sized local businesses through the Council's own purchasing, and by ensuring the council's regulatory functions are quick to respond to local needs.
- Support the Covered Market and identify other opportunities to promote independent local businesses.
- Help district and local centres to flourish with enhanced street cleaning, signage, and promotion of the out-of-centre shopping and entertainment offer.
- Back our major employers that underpin the City's economy, ensuring a forward-looking and dynamic council ready to adapt as our economy evolves.
- Encourage a flourishing knowledge economy, ensuring that the Council works with the sector to their and the City's mutual benefit.
- Promote sustainable tourism, providing benefits to the city without exacerbating its affordable housing shortage.

Sustainable City Finances

- Invest in organisations that advance social and environmental outcomes aligned with the council's priorities.
- Explore income-raising opportunities from redevelopment / re-allocation of the council's city-centre land, property and moveable-asset portfolio.
- Integrate social and environmental impact criteria into the council's investment decision-making.
- Enhance transparency about council spending and investment criteria.

Local Government Reorganisation

The government is set to announce its direction on local government re-organisation in July. Regardless of the new boundaries. We will:

- Set the groundwork for more efficient and coordinated delivery of essential services.

A SAFER, CLEANER OXFORD

Our city can be safer and cleaner than it is now. We want to create civic pride, and safer streets. We will:

HMO and Selective (rental property) Licensing

- Strengthen standards and enforcement, so that everyone in HMOs and rental accommodation can have a safe, decent home.

Taxi and Private Hire Licensing

- Ensure standards reduce road danger and emissions wherever possible.
- Review how the private hire and hackney carriage trade delivers for disabled residents.
- Ensure the trade is accessible to prospective new and especially female entrant drivers.

Premises Licensing

- Support a vibrant night-time social scene catering to diverse interests, that strikes the right balance between residents and visitors' needs.
- Reduce anti-social behaviour and noise issues that relate to licensed premises affecting residents.

Community Safety

- Work to reduce road deaths and injuries all policy areas under city council control.
- Commit to Vision Zero, a strategy to eliminate all traffic fatalities and severe injuries, while increasing safe, healthy, equitable mobility for all.
- Pursue city vehicles (particularly refuse trucks) that maximise visibility and reduce road danger.

Street Cleaning, Residential and Commercial Recycling & Waste

- Reintroduce regular proactive deep cleaning, and target areas of higher footfall within residential areas.
- Explore better solutions for commercial waste in the city centre, with less on-street bagged storage that can be vulnerable to wildlife or encourage ASB.
- Maximise incentives to recycle, compost and otherwise reduce landfill and incineration.

Business regulation

- Invest in improved environmental health and licensing enforcement capacity, so that there is a level playing field for our city's hard-working entrepreneurs.
- Convene enforcement agencies to better combat financial crime, such as money laundering fronts operating out of retail premises.

Air Quality

- Support measures to improve air quality under the council's direct control, including encouraging businesses and traders to migrate away from fossil fuels wherever possible.
- Promote environmentally-sustainable business practices at events hosted in the city, and in venues owned and operated by the city.

A HEALTHIER OXFORD

Green spaces are the lungs of our beautiful city and important spaces for the community to meet. As climate change increases, so will our need for green spaces to reduce urban heating, provide shade and manage storm water. We will work for:

Parks and public spaces

- Better maintenance and renovation of playgrounds and sports facilities in parks.
- Deliver a city centre children's play space aimed at shoppers and visitors.
- Seek human-centred, nature-centred public space in the city centre.
- Develop community-led pocket parks, streetside planting and nature areas.
- Upgrade and renovate decaying street furniture and facilities, including public lavatories.
- Fund more urban greenery, including in the city centre.
- Identify new income-generation opportunities for the council that make better use of underused green spaces without compromising their natural landscapes.
- Support public space walkability and quality-of-life improvements, including benches, pavement quality and water fountains.

Leisure

Oxford's leisure centres are great resources but we need to ensure access for all. We will:

- Prefer charitable and community-benefit providers to the extent permissible by law.
- Subsidise vital provision, such as leisure for schools and children's swimming tuition.
- Support Youth Workers across the city.

- Support for children's holiday clubs at leisure centres.
- Support children learning to cycle.

Smoke-free Oxford

Cleaner air means freedom from passive smoking and vaping. We will:

- Support smoke-free pavement licensed premises to both reduce passive smoking and set a better example to children and young people.
- Support delivery on the Smoke-Free Oxfordshire commitment.
- Restrict smoking outside council leisure facilities and offices on council land.

Transport and Connectivity

Much of transport policy is the responsibility of the County Council. However, working with them on issues to improve city connectivity and independent mobility of children is important. We will:

- Support scalable provision to better cope with short-term repair works where the City takes on responsibility for road and pavement maintenance.
- Advocate for joined-up transportation, including opportunities for better rail/bus interchange and joint ticketing.
- Support infrastructure that enables walking, cycling and public transport as the best ways to get around. Back the County Council's measures to prioritise these modes of transport within the city.
- Support measures to promote children's independent mobility, and encourage walking and cycling.
- Work with the County Council on improved tourist coach parking arrangements.

A NATURE-POSITIVE, NET-ZERO OXFORD

There is a climate and nature emergency and Oxford must do its part. We will:

Net Zero council operations and assets

- Enhance emission-reduction relating to the council's offices, social housing stock, commercial property portfolio and ODS-owned fleet.
- Commit to heat pump replacement of fossil fuel heating.

Climate change, nature and resilience

- Declare a Nature Emergency.
- Promote local community management and governance of pavement areas and adopt nature based solutions to support climate change adaptation and nature restoration.

- Identify nature restoration opportunities in the city's land assets.
- Climate proof community centres to be flood and extreme heat resilient.
- Explore innovative approaches to climate risk reduction and financial protection.