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MAY 5



Contents

	Introduction	pg 3
	Our record – pressing for change since 2018	pg 5
1	Tackling the climate emergency	pg 6
2	A cleaner and greener city, collecting waste and protecting the environment	pg 6
3	A safer city	pg 8
4	Building our communities - power to the people	pg 9
5	A city that works - homes & jobs	pg 10
6	A city that cares - A healthy, happier, more equal city for families, children & all residents	pg 12
7	A city that moves – transport issues & road safety	pg 13
8	Keeping house – internal reform and management of the Council and its finances	pg 16

A BRIGHTER FUTURE FOR BIRMINGHAM

*Introduction:
Cllr. Jon Hunt, group leader of
Birmingham Liberal Democrats*



Birmingham City Council needs radical change.

Labour has appallingly wasted the opportunity of ten years of control, supporting a culture of excuses and making the City Council ever more distant from its population.

We have had a leadership obsessed with big, high-spending projects at the expense of the lives of the ordinary people of the city.

As a city, we must find answers to the big problems of fly tipping, of road safety, of social care and the basic issue of why the Council is so appallingly inefficient at collecting waste. We must have a Council that listens to its citizens and is fair to them.

As a city, we have to face the future, with many converging challenges. Effective action on climate change will help deliver answers to other problems such as the rising cost of fuel, accelerated by a horrible and brutal war in eastern Europe.

The rising **cost of living** is making life very frightening for many people. The Council must address it by justifying every penny raised in extra council tax, using it wisely for the benefit of the people of the city; it must lead in action to **reduce fuel costs** by switching to and encouraging alternative sources; it must be proactive in helping those hardest hit.

We set out **solutions** in this manifesto. Some of them involve **big thinking** – about how to move the council closer to the people. About how to develop the Clean Air Zone so it delivers **clean air** and related benefits **for the whole city**, not just a tight cordon in the city centre. About how to make it “customer friendly” rather than being a charging system that defaults to punitive fines.

Some of our ideas we have aired repeatedly over the last four years. Some are presented here for the first time. Some of our proposals are simple, straightforward pledges that we know will make a **big difference to householders and the most vulnerable people**. Some are radical and far-reaching. Our school safety zones – to be offered throughout the city - go well beyond anything that has so far been established anywhere else.

Our **solutions** are **liberal** and **democratic**. As liberals we believe free and fair markets can be harnessed for the public good. Sometimes the council undertakes tasks that are beyond its competence. Sometimes it is by far the best institution to take on a job.

We believe **Birmingham** is at heart a **liberal city** where people of many backgrounds, beliefs and lifestyles live together and enjoy each other’s company. This is a recipe for it being a city of wonderful diverse communities – but only if we have a City Council that cherishes these qualities and **empowers communities** to be their best.

Liberal Democrat councillors in the city have a for a long time kept a close bond with the communities they represent. Their knowledge of basic problems such as potholes and fly tipping and where council services fail has long been reflected in the powerful contribution our party makes to the City Council. **It is time for a change in Birmingham**, after years of failure, and that change can be achieved by entrusting the Liberal Democrats with the running of the city.

Six to fix - Liberal Democrat priorities

1

Bring back special street collections and free home bulky waste collections, significantly improve failing waste collections, street cleaning, and recycling services.

2

Radical devolution of power and resources to local communities to tackle fly tipping, road safety, pollution, and other serious problems.

3

Roll out average speed cameras on main highways, quadrupling in four years, to ensure dangerous and reckless drivers are brought to book.

4

Funding for four hundred “walking bus conductors” to revolutionise school journeys, providing pupils safe and healthy walking routes to and from school.

5

Cut energy costs with a massive drive to harness alternative energy, and a huge program of effective insulation in people’s homes.

6

Tackle Labour’s waste on the Council, and make it more responsive to the people, with genuine, meaningful consultation with residents about their communities

OUR RECORD - PRESSING FOR CHANGE SINCE 2018

In the last four years, our group of eight councillors has had an influence on the City Council well beyond our size. While our battles with the administration over waste management, fly tipping, and big and controversial projects may have grabbed the headlines, month after month we have brought forward constructive ideas that have changed the council's policies. But even though a proposal may gain "all party" support, making it happen requires an administration committed to it as a priority. Too often too little happens in response to successful initiatives.

Here are some examples of motions we have tabled at council which have been accepted, in wholly or mostly, after revisions by the other political groups:

- July 2018 – A successful call for a plan to reduce the use of single use plastics.
- December 2018 – Backing for community policing and reform of the 101 service. Championed last year by group leader Jon Hunt in the Police and Crime Commissioner elections
- January 2019 – Backing for pilot schemes for food waste recycling. Not one has been established.
- April 2019 – A call for action against hateful behaviour at schools and at religious centres.
- June 2019 – Part of an all-party declaration of Climate Emergency, demanding the Council achieve zero carbon by 2020
- January 2020 – A call for action on street cleaning and fly tipping
- September 2021 – A call for Birmingham to resume the programme of average speed cameras on main highways
- November 2021– A call for action on antisocial parking on city streets, e.g., vehicles blocking paths
- January 2022 – A call for action on road safety and clean air around city schools to be stepped up together with the proposal for "David's Law", legal change to secure cooperation between schools, the police, and the Council in tackling these problems.



1. TACKLING THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY

The proposals here are developed in other sections of this Plan (marked in brackets) and underpin everything. Achieving zero carbon will help tackle fuel poverty and many of the city's other problems. It is not a diversion from other problems.

To deliver a zero carbon Council by 2030 and significant reductions in carbon emissions across the city we need:

- A wholesale shift to non-carbon fuelled vehicles, primarily electric vehicles. (7)
- A significant shift to zero carbon housing combined with extensive action to access alternative and renewable fuel sources. (5)
- A hugely improved public transport offer (7)
- A city with more trees and biodiversity and more pleasant neighbourhoods (6 & 4)
- An end to the incineration of waste and the use of landfill. (2)



We have proposed a £1 million biodiversity fund, funded on an annual basis. This would provide matched funding for community initiatives, such as those to be funded by the community chest. An example would be a project that developed gardens on grass verges, perhaps harnessing volunteers and overcoming the red tape that might prevent this happening.

2. A CLEANER AND GREENER CITY, COLLECTING WASTE AND PROTECTING THE ENVIRONMENT

Birmingham City Council has failed in its responsibility to prevent fly tipping and collect the waste. It has failed over many years to achieve success in recycling. Over the last eight months Labour has sought to set aside budgets to address these problems. They have proved too little, too late. Anti-fly tipping cameras have failed to appear in significant numbers. Mobile Household Recycling Services have failed to collect significant amounts of recycling and have proved inaccessible for many residents.

We have therefore stated as a priority we would expect the following to happen (with these priorities, we will expect the Council to find the resources, as it has frequently done for the Labour administration's priorities):

- The restoration of at least one free bulky collection per household per year. In the first year the priority would be the disabled and the very elderly.
- The restoration of a programme of special street collections, which for many years allowed residents to put large amounts of rubbish on the verge on a specified day, once every three years.
- A requirement that items collected as bulky waste, e.g., furniture, are offered for reuse if at all possible and that all collections are sorted thoroughly for recyclables. Co-location of reuse charities with household recycling centres will be encouraged.
- Amendments to targets which disincentivise council departments to take lawbreakers to court. A target of 100% success in prosecutions means that very few are brought. People who fly tip or breach other areas of council regulation, such as planning or licensing, must know that they risk facing the justice of the courts. **We will set a target for the number of prosecutions to be brought as a percentage of complaints.**



- The immediate introduction of a pilot scheme for household food waste recycling. The city will be required to do this citywide soon. It must be ready.
- Waste collection services will be given 12 months to deliver improvements and prove that waste can be collected on the correct day. We will do this recognising there has been recent investment in new management and vehicles. If the service fails to improve, we will bring in partners to run the service, based on the three-sector plan for the city we proposed in 2018. This would mean three different partners, bringing in expertise and operating in a competitive environment requiring them to provide a high standard of service and to drive up recycling rates.
- For 25 years the council has avoided penalties for landfill of waste by using incineration. This is not sustainable as incineration contributes to carbon dioxide emissions. We will not sign contracts for incineration which discourage recycling, which must be increased significantly in the city. Rates of recycling have declined since Labour took power in 2012. It is unlikely the Tyseley incinerator will be commercially feasible as a result of this policy.



By introducing an improved version of the original community chest system, we will enable communities to employ their own environmental wardens. By being focused on their local communities, rather than the chain of command, these wardens proved they will work to solve problems and respond to resident concerns, e.g., about persistent littering. At present Lib Dem research has revealed that the vast majority of littering fines are levied only in the city centre.

3. A SAFER CITY

Last year the Liberal Democrats campaigned in the Police and Crime Commissioner elections for the restoration of community policing. This call was taken up by the successful candidate, but we continue to wait for evidence that the new leadership understands community policing.

The closure of police stations in communities without providing neighbourhood teams with alternative bases has contributed to their disappearance from community life and visibility on the streets. Simply adding more officers without a plan to ensure they are rooted in their communities will be ineffective, leading to officers spending too much time stuck in traffic travelling from central bases to communities.

We will therefore work proactively with the police to identify local premises, such as community centres, which can be used as secure local bases for police teams. We will also ensure the council uses its powers in full to tackle antisocial behaviour and causes of community tension by setting targets to bring prosecutions (in contrast with the current practice which deters prosecutions (see section 2).



A community chest will include a significant amount of capital. A local community could use this to match-fund police investment to convert a room in a community centre into a secure base for teams. This means they can “parade” in communities, using I.T. to communicate.



Area committees could use funding to resume gating and protecting of shared drives. They can also use the revenue for maintenance of these facilities.



Road safety

This manifesto will set out further proposals for road safety in section 7, on Transport, in particular for safety for children and parents in the vicinity of schools.

4. BUILDING OUR COMMUNITIES - POWER TO THE PEOPLE

In 2014, Lord Kerslake, appointed by the government, identified many of the problems with Birmingham City Council. Many of these arise from it being the largest local authority of its kind in Europe – with very few local councils operating in the city at a lower level.

Kerslake's analysis was good, his prescriptions flawed, and the new structure of one and two member wards made it hard to envisage how localisation will work in the city. Kerslake's intention was that these wards should represent natural communities. The result is imperfect, but it offers a basis for radical change and localisation based on natural communities rather than artificial parliamentary constituency boundaries.

Based on our experience since 2018, Liberal Democrats have now developed far ranging proposals for devolution.

We will create a system of area committees, each comprising a minimum of five councillors. Their structure will be determined “organically” allowing local ward members to decide who to partner with – and local community groups to make submissions.

The committees will be awarded significant budgets in revenue and capital. They will also have access to enhanced existing budgets in areas such as highways (see Transport section). From the year 2023-24 there will be a fund of £5 million in revenue and £10 million in capital for area committees, equivalent to £50,000 a year per councillor for allocation by area committees.

We will not attempt to devolve existing services to area committees – although an area committee might make a bid to take over an existing service.

When there is windfall cash – as happened last year when the pandemic left the Council with a £70 million surplus – substantial amounts will be devolved to area committees.

These measures will enable area committees to pursue the kind of initiatives we have set out in many of our examples.

Community and neighbourhood Councils

Also known, confusingly, as parish councils, these Councils will have a significant role to play. We will continue to lobby for them to be elected by single transferable vote to ensure that their membership is truly representative of their communities and that they are not stifled by party block voting.

We will reduce the turnout threshold for approval referenda from the present unachievable 25% to 10%. We believe that level is sufficient to ensure that residents are well aware a referendum is taking place and can campaign for or against effectively.



A community council might employ its own gardener. It could then take over areas of grass verging and central reservation and replace grass with community gardens.

Neighbourhood Planning

This is a complex and demanding process that should deliver rewards for communities with specific needs. For instance, in Perry Barr ward the city's second only neighbourhood plan delivers proposals for a "garden suburb" and wide-ranging measures to reduce flooding risk.

The process has been available for over a decade but has been little used in Birmingham. It is easier for community councils than resident groups. It is challenging for planning departments as it sets local rules. We will support effective neighbourhood planning as part of moving the city away from its traditional "one size fits all" approach.

Petitions

Liberal Democrats strongly support the right to protest, which includes an effective and open approach to petitions. We will reduce the current high thresholds applied to public petitions.

This means that:

- 2,000 signatures a hearing before the relevant scrutiny committee
- 5,000 signatures from Birmingham residents secures a debate in full council (or a hearing at scrutiny, if the petitioners prefer)

Based on experience of Labour shutting down debates on petitions at full council, we will also reform procedures to ensure that petitioners are given a full and fair hearing, including a right of reply, when a topic comes to Council for debate.



5. A CITY THAT WORKS - HOMES & JOBS

Building homes

We have supported the city's programme of investment in municipal housing, whilst being concerned at how few new social homes it has delivered.

We will tighten standards, both within the council and the planning system, on the carbon output of new homes. It is pointless declaring a climate emergency and then building homes that are not close to zero carbon, as has happened in Birmingham.

Zero carbon homes will primarily use heat pumps and solar heating and will be designed to ensure **good retention of heat and good air conditioning** in hot weather. We will expect developers to aim for "passivhaus" standard e.g., truly zero carbon.

The city has significant estates of its own and significant powers over planning. It should use these to ensure that all available spaces are used to harvest **solar energy** and, where appropriate, wind power. We would start by setting aside £500,00 for pilot projects, as proposed in our alternative budget this year.

Out of date planning policies are holding back private development. We would have a presumption that **brown-field land is available for housing**. However, in return we would expect private developers to show how they are investing in community facilities in their developments. This includes retail premises as well as play/recreation facilities for families.

The problem of homelessness highlights the failure of the system of so-called exempt accommodation that has blighted the city. We will continue to support projects in which the council provides its own halfway housing for the two categories of homeless – those made homeless through loss of their homes and those living on the streets. This is both cost effective and can ensure targeted support for those who struggle to maintain a home.

We will continue to press for root and branch reform of the exempt accommodation system. All those in these properties should have oversight and support from a professional agency, e.g., the Probation Service, a mental health trust or the Council's housing department. **There should be no more blank cheques for those who abuse the system.**



Jobs & Skills

The city needs to build effective partnerships with businesses, along with the West Midlands Combined Authority. In national government, Liberal Democrats led the resurgence of apprenticeships.

On the one hand, sometimes the WMCA has gone for the “quick win” of putting money into poor quality employment schemes, such as warehousing. On the other hand, the City Council has over-zoned, discouraging business initiative. Public support should be linked to **training, apprenticeships** and access to **employment** projects.

Poor access to work and uptake of employment among some sections of the community remain a concern. We will continue to support access projects, lobbying for a continuation of the **Regional Development Funding** formerly provided by the European Union.

We will also work with schools and colleges to ensure a focus on those young people in danger of not achieving qualifications and not participating in the workforce. Liberal Democrats are great believers in **lifelong learning**; we will encourage the development of “skills wallets,” to fund retraining or upskilling.

6. A CITY THAT CARES - A HEALTHY, HAPPIER, MORE EQUAL CITY FOR FAMILIES, CHILDREN & ALL RESIDENTS

We have already set out proposals that could:

- See local councillors investing in youth facilities.
- See private developers required to invest in facilities.

In section 7, we set out proposals that will enable and encourage children and their parents to do the “school run” on foot, creating pleasant, safe, and cheerful walking routes to and from school.

Our councillors have championed the concept of “David’s Law” – legal changes that would require cooperation between schools, the police, and the council over child safety in the environment around the school. While the primary focus is on road safety, it would also encompass coordinated action to prevent the creation of gangs at secondary schools.

Poverty reduction

Liberal Democrats have called for the testing of so-called **universal basic income** schemes. We will support and seek resources of trials of this kind.

Events

The Commonwealth Games is the largest event the city has ever staged but comes on the back of years of experience. It has also highlighted deficiencies in the city’s approach. It is too quick to sign deals for events that are ticket only.

Whilst recognising that ticketing is necessary for high profile and expensive events, we will not sign agreements that prevent “fringe” activity around major events. In fact, we will encourage the development of fringes so that, for instance, the annual Pride Day is not restricted to one part of the city.



A park is situated a quarter of a mile from a school. It has significant on street parking around it plus car parks within it. It becomes the gathering place for a “walking bus.” After school children returning home use the park’s play facilities and observe its nature. The local area committee, noting the increased use of the park, then invests in improved facilities.



Equalities

Liberal Democrats are committed to supporting rights to equal treatment and respect of all people whilst providing additional support for those who are disadvantaged by poor social attitudes towards race, sexuality, gender, religion, or disability.

Within the city council, the biggest challenge is currently race equality. In particular there are low proportions of senior managers from ethnic minorities. We will ensure that all recruitment panels have people from ethnic minorities on long-lists and that those on long lists encourage candidates from all disadvantaged groups.

Recent years have seen significant tensions between disadvantaged groups, in particular over education. Whilst running the council, Liberal Democrat councillors pioneered new approaches to relationships and sex education and supported a new approach to religious education, aiming to enhance learning about the values embedded in all faith and non-faith positions.

The care and education of children with special educational needs and disabilities has been scandalously mismanaged. We will support an improvement programme, ensuring effective monitoring and scrutiny. We will also work to enhance the voice of children, students and their families.

7. A CITY THAT MOVES - TRANSPORT ISSUES & ROAD SAFETY

A low carbon economy requires good public transport and a switch to low carbon vehicles. Our policies will support this whilst respecting the aspiration that individuals have for freedom of movement in their lives and control over their personal transport. Freedom of movement applies to all kinds of movement and therefore requires good facilities for "active travel" involving pedestrians and cyclists.

There are two pressing and closely related issues:

1. What is to be the future of the Clean Air Zone (CAZ), which levies charges in the city centre?
2. How will clean air and low carbon transport be delivered throughout a city of more than a million people?

By reform of the CAZ and a radical programme of devolution we believe the second question can be answered. The CAZ has been mismanaged, as:

- its revenues have wrongly been directed to repaving of the city centre (nearly £9 million)
- it is not customer friendly. Customers cannot open accounts, cannot find out if they have incurred a charge and cannot arrange for charges to be debited automatically. For users, the first notice they get of a charge (which should be £8) is a penalty notice. As a result, half its income has come from fines, which can be more than £100 in contrast with the basic £8 charge.
- Its boundaries need re-examination. Should it include parts of the middle ring road that run alongside housing? Should it exclude business districts that are not primarily residential or heavily used by pedestrians?

We will:

- focus revenue from the Clean Air Zone on a radical programme of local clean air and safety zones centres on schools.
- cease funding city centre paving from the CAZ
- use funding to make significant contributions to enhance public transport.
- the charge will be renamed to "Schools Safety Contribution."

We will enter immediate negotiations with Government over a proper customer account facility. **If necessary we will suspend the CAZ until this is resolved.** Once a proper customer system is established the charges can be restructured.

For instance, the initial charge might be £6 if paid on account and £10 if paid on receipt of a notice (thus allowing for admin costs). We will then extend the criteria for paying the charge until all vehicles, except the totally electric, pay some fee. There will be a sliding scale based on carbon emissions but also on the value and size of vehicles. So, initially, a hybrid vehicle might pay a nominal amount, on account, of £1.

The result is that road users will pay a subvention for using the city centre, **knowing exactly what good causes their payments support.** By avoiding the city centre or using public transport, they can avoid the charges. As part of this offer to road users, we will pledge to **keep the A38 tunnels and flyovers open,** recognising that users will pay for the privilege of using them.

We will **extend the right to use bus lanes to private hire vehicles** which are electric or hybrid. This will incentivise those who own vehicles, and live in the city, to use private hire for travel (as such vehicles are already on the road). This will also help to **reduce congestion,** which then further **reduces emissions and increases air quality.**



The school safety zones

We will continue to support local determination of how this works. But as part of the deployment of income from the CAZ we will make the following offers (based on projected annual income of £18m):

- 400 **“walking bus conductors”** to be employed by schools. Enough for one per school
- 10 additional **schools liaison officers** to be employed by the police.
- £5 million in capital a year to establish school exclusion and safety zones, including funding for resident parking permit schemes around schools along with “red lining” to prevent drop-offs in the zones.
- Schools would also be allocated a number of permits for parents and children who have special requirements or difficulties. In the event of non-cooperation of a school, this might be imposed, and the school would have to sign cooperation agreements to get permits.
- Given the placing of most schools, especially primary schools, each safety zone would have significant impact on its local community, requiring **extensive community consultation.** That will be part of the job of the area committees.



A school might have three “circles” of zones.

The immediate road outside its gates might be an exclusion zone, prohibited to vehicles, except those with resident permits, for limited times.

A wider zone might be restricted parking using parking permits and red lines. On the edge of that zone would be the “walking bus” collection points.

A further wider zone might include 20mph limits and other road safety measures.



A school might identify substantial numbers of children interested in cycling to school. These children could also gather at a “pedal bus” collection point and proceed, with supervision, along car free roads and paths to school, where facilities would be provided for safe storage of bicycles. As a scheme developed, there would be funding to provide free bicycles for children and students from poor backgrounds.

Electric vehicles

This is a fast-moving area of technology and crucial in the fight against climate change. The Council must take opportunities that facilitate the use of electric vehicles and can help draw in revenue.

Roadside lampposts offer opportunities for private, rented roadside spaces. As lampposts will tend to offer “trickle charging” we will offer **dedicated roadside spaces** on lease for people without access to household charging.

We will expect all multi-story car parks to offer at least one floor of **high-speed charging points**.

Speed cameras

We will roll out average speed cameras, quadrupling within four years, on main highways to ensure dangerous and reckless drivers are brought to book. The cameras can help **remove dangerous drivers from the roads** and by directing drivers with minor breaches to road safety courses ensure overall improvements in standard of driving.

Public transport

The city is a constituent member of the West Midlands Combined Authority, and we expect it to play a key part in shaping policies of Transport for West Midlands.

We will therefore press for the introduction of a “**Brummie ticket**”, allowing **low-cost travel** within the city, as has been done in other parts of the region.

Reopening rail lines remains a priority for us. It creates significant extra space for movement in the city. The Moseley and King’s Heath line must open on time.

We would seek investment in 21st century technology for managing the transport network, aiming to make it ready for driverless vehicles and enabling systems that ensure, for instance, efficient use of traffic light junctions. Where driver behaviour is poor, this will include the use of **high-tech enforcement cameras**. We will investigate the use of mobile enforcement cameras enabling rapid action to tackle hotspots.

We will run “**switch off your engine**” campaigns at busy junctions, introducing count-down signs as funds allow.

We will support the development of significantly **more park and ride**, examining how city centre car parks can be moved outside the middle ring, creating effective park and ride and shuttle bus services. By freeing valuable city centre land, such projects should be self-funding.

Birmingham's City Centre and its local centres

We will support the expansion of Business Improvement Districts (BIDS) and other local and city centre management schemes. As part of this we expect to see good access to public toilets and free water (allowing reuse of water bottles)

There continues to be very poor access for those using city centre bus stops and very poor signage. The Metro has very limited stopping facilities in the city centre, making a mockery of its £1 short run fare. All this requires highly visible signing and way-marking.

WMCA's new Sprint bus services will be kept under review. Under current proposals, the main city centre stop will be at Moor Street, meaning users may need to hop onto short haul buses.

We will use whatever powers we have available as a landlord and a city council to deter the establishment of premises that prey on the vulnerable close to bus interchanges e.g., instant loan businesses and fixed odds betting terminals.

We will review busking rules to identify zones that can support high quality street performances.



In a neighbourhood, around a school and a shopping centre, pavement parking is a significant hazard, making pavements inaccessible and dangerous for wheelchairs, pushchairs etc. Legislation exists to ban pavement parking without using on-street yellow lines. The relevant area committee will use that legislation. The City Council will facilitate access to that legislation, not obstruct local policies.

8. KEEPING HOUSE - INTERNAL REFORM AND MANAGEMENT OF THE COUNCIL AND ITS FINANCES.

We have already here set out proposals for:

- Sector tendering of waste services
- Area committees and budgets

We believe that **under Labour the city cabinet has failed** in its duty to monitor the basic services the Council provides – **street maintenance, refuse collection and street cleaning**. This **neglect has worsened** under three successive leaders.

An expert inquiry, following the 2017 bin strike, noted that cabinet members should read all papers before approving them. When agendas are routinely 1,000 pages long involving several dozen items, all approved in the space of two hours, it is hard to believe this happens.

There is too little challenge and scrutiny of decision that spend large sums of money by councillors. Too many projects have overrun their budgets. Too many projects have proved ill-considered.

As an example, that threads through this document, the Council underspent by £70 million in 2020. Labour seized on this to put aside quite big budgets for tackling fly tipping. The millions spent in the last 12 months have had little impact because it was clearly just a knee-jerk reaction to public anger in the run up to this year's elections. Even scrutiny recommendations have been ignored while costly YouTube based "name and shame" videos have proved embarrassingly inadequate.

It is time for radical change.

As noted earlier, Kerslake's tinkering on the edges proposals (20% reduction in council size) have failed to deliver a council that listens to its citizens and delivers good basic services.

We will therefore seek to abandon the cabinet system and its rubber-stamping of complex proposals. **We will reintroduce a committee system for decision making, drawing on the talents and concerns of councillors of all parties.**

This will sit alongside the new system of area committees, which will hold local officers to account as well as managing substantial discretionary funds.

We will also enhance the independence of those committees that oversee the Council's actions. As well as scrutiny committees and the audit committee, this includes the planning committee, and we will ensure it is supported by staff who are independent of the present regeneration portfolio.

Summary

In spite of high-profile events, like the Commonwealth Games, under Labour's leadership Birmingham has drifted in recent years, failing to confront the serious issues that beset us as a city. With weak oversight from **Labour**, the Council has suffered from **weak management** and a **culture of excuses for poor performance**. This **must change** and can only change if the Council is brought closer to the people it represents, and is led by a leadership with a clear sense of direction. The experienced team of Birmingham Liberal Democrats will achieve this change, if we are entrusted with the task by the people of our great City.



Acocks Green, Allens Cross, Alum Rock, Aston, Balsall Heath West, Bartley Green, Billesley, Birchfield, Bordesley & Highgate, Bordesley Green, Bournbrook & Selly Park, Bournville & Cotteridge, Brandwood & King's Heath, Bromford & Hodge Hill, Castle Vale, Druids Heath & Monyhull, Edgbaston, Erdington, Frankley Great Park, Garretts Green, Glebe Farm & Tile Cross, Gravelly Hill, Hall Green North, Hall Green South, Handsworth, Handsworth Wood, Harborne, Heartlands, Highter's Heath, Holyhead, King's Norton North, King's Norton South, Kingstanding, Ladywood, Longbridge & West Heath, Lozells, Moseley, Nechells, Newtown, North Edgbaston, Northfield, Oscott, Perry Barr, Perry Common, Pype Hayes, Quinton, Rubery & Rednal, Shard End, Sheldon, Small Heath, Soho & Jewellery Quarter, South Yardley, Sparkbrook & Balsall Heath East, Sparkhill, Stirchley, Stockland Green, Sutton Four Oaks, Sutton Mere Green, Sutton Reddicap, Sutton Roughley, Sutton Trinity, Sutton Vesey, Sutton Walmley & Minworth, Sutton Wylde Green, Tyseley & Hay Mills, Ward End, Weoley & Selly Oak, Yardley East, Yardley West & Stechford

