

# A fairer greener and better Southwark

The Liberal Democrat programme for Southwark  
2010-14

*“The Liberal Democrats exist to build and safeguard a fair, free and open society, in which we seek to balance the fundamental values of liberty, equality and community and in which no-one shall be enslaved by poverty, ignorance or conformity”*

Preamble to the Liberal Democrat Constitution.

## **Fairer, Greener and Better**

Introduction by Nick Stanton

Southwark has been transformed by the Liberal Democrats. In just a few short years the Borough has gone from one of the worst in London to one of the best. Prudent budgeting and financial competence has meant Southwark residents have benefited from below cost of living council tax rises or no rises, rather than inflation busting rises under Labour, local peoples' satisfaction with the council has increased and the local environment has improved with people feeling much safer, with better street lighting, cleaner streets, a revolution in recycling and action to reduce greenhouse emissions with even tougher targets than the 10:10 campaign.

Over the last five years, Southwark Council has invested more than £370 million in council homes delivering refurbished homes and estates to a much higher standard than the Labour government's basic standard – giving tenants what they want, rather than what they are told they need. And the schemes to regenerate Bermondsey Spa, Canada Water, the Aylesbury and The Elephant and Castle are – despite Gordon Brown's recession – on track.

More Southwark children are getting a good start in life than ever before with record results year on year for both primary and GCSE pupils. A record that stands in stark contrast to Labour, who oversaw a schools system so dreadful that their own government had to privatise the education department and hand it to firm of road engineers to run.

It's clear nationally after 13 years that Labour's time is up – they've let down the people of Southwark and of the UK, but that doesn't mean the Tories deserve support – they never stand up for everyday people. So it's no surprise that more and more former Labour voters are realising it's the Liberal Democrats who share their important values – helping the poorest and weakest in society, fighting injustice and discrimination and protecting vital public services.

In this programme for the next four years, the Liberal Democrats guarantee to make Southwark a fairer, greener and better place to live, work, visit and bring up children.

As usual, the election across Southwark is between the Liberal Democrats and Labour – a vote for the other parties may just allow Labour to sneak back in.

In 2002 and 2006 Southwark Liberal Democrats created a list called "Six to Fix" – six cast iron promises which we promised to implement. We kept those promises. This year we are promising another Six to Fix. They are, if you like, the highlights of this manifesto.

Yours sincerely



Nick Stanton  
Leader of Southwark Liberal Democrats

**A Liberal Democrat Council will:**

1. Protect those on low and fixed incomes by keeping Southwark's council tax below the London average.
2. Tackle overcrowding by making at least 1800 family homes available for rent via the council's Home Search over the next 4 years.
3. Build a new recycling centre on the Old Kent Road so that recycling can increase by 2014 to more than 10 times the maximum level achieved under Labour.
4. Boost the opportunities for local young people to get a good education and meet the need for more school places by opening three more new secondary schools by 2014 and making sure children have a good primary school place within a mile of their home.
5. Give people more say over how their council tax is spent by handing over more local decisions and money to Community Councils.
6. Create a 'Senior Citizen Support Team' to help senior citizens with housing, money and health issues and make sure they access all the benefits and entitlements they are due.

## **A fairer borough**

In Southwark after 13 years of a Labour government there are still 20,000 children who are entitled to free school meals because their families are so poor. Around 30,000 adults are out of work. The local NHS is facing cuts of £95 million.

The Liberal Democrats are committed to creating a fairer society and tackling Labour's shameful legacy.

That means keeping Council Tax down, providing the best start for children and families, and ensuring that everyone, regardless of their background, has the opportunity to access training, skills and childcare. In Southwark, fairness also means ensuring that local people can live free from the fear of crime, in the homes they deserve – homes, which are properly insulated, with the right number of bedrooms.

Since 2002, the Liberal Democrats have spent hundreds of millions of pounds to tackle poverty, by investing in our estates, building new schools, and by ensuring that local people have access to skills and training.

Liberal Democrats believe that Southwark's families must have the support they need. We will continue to invest in our Children's Centres, primary and secondary schools, and libraries to ensure future generations can achieve their full potential.

We will help people left behind by Labour by ensuring that individual advice on issues such as training and skills and childcare is brought to them, either at home or within local community facilities.

Under eight years of the Liberal Democrats, Council Tax has risen by 12.5% - lower than the cost of living. This compares to a rise of 92.5% between 1994 and 2002 under Labour, and a rise since 2002 in the money that the GLA demands from Southwark's residents of more than double.

As part of our commitment to creating a fairer borough, the Liberal Democrats have ensured that Southwark has the lowest level of Council Tax in south-east London, and we're committed to keeping council tax in Southwark below the London average for the next four years.

A Liberal Democrat council will continue to work with local people on ambitious regeneration plans to provide more and better affordable homes. We will continue to lobby the government to provide more money for our estates. Unlike Labour we do not believe that council tenants should be forced to change their landlord in order to get the money to maintain and improve their homes.

**Six actions for a fairer borough.**

A Liberal Democrat council will:

1. Protect those on low and fixed incomes by keeping Southwark's council tax below the London average.
2. Tackle overcrowding by making at least 1800 family homes available for rent via the council's Home Search over the next 4 years. We will do this through building new affordable homes, by offering greater incentives for people 'under occupying' larger council homes to switch to smaller properties, by creating (where appropriate) extra bedrooms in existing Council properties, and by cracking down on illegal sub-letting.
3. Boost opportunities for local young people to get a good education and meet the need for more school places by opening three more new secondary schools by September 2014 - in Rotherhithe, in Walworth and a permanent home for East Dulwich Boys School next to Peckham Rye – and ensure children have a good primary school place within a mile of their home.
4. Work to give children the best possible start in life. We will use Southwark's new network of children's centres to make sure that all children, regardless of background, are ready for their first year in primary school.
5. Make sure that everyone has access to the help and support they need to train for, and get into, work. We will do this by providing training and skills advice to people in their homes and in local community facilities such as Children's Centres.
6. Continue to be committed to council housing and will invest in Southwark's Council homes rather than privatising them as Labour have done in Lambeth. We will continue to lobby government for more money for the homes of our tenants and leaseholders to make sure that people in Southwark can live in the quality of home they deserve. Council housing tenants and leaseholders will continue to see improving management and maintenance of their homes.

## **A greener borough**

Southwark is now a more green and environmentally friendly place than ever before. But there is much more to do.

It is clear that Labour in Southwark is no friend of the environment – their near 40 year tenure at the helm of the council which ended in 2002, saw a recycling rate of just 3.6% and falling. Green spaces were unkempt, roads were dirty and unswept and graffiti and vandalism were rife. Southwark was officially rated as having the fifth dirtiest streets in the capital.

The Liberal Democrat leadership has transformed our borough; achieving a six-fold increase in recycling by expanding what can be recycled and making it easier for residents to play a part by introducing doorstep collection (including for residents of flats & estates). We have cleaner and safer streets, many hundreds of new street trees and better parks and leisure facilities. Southwark now has the third cleanest streets in London.

A new recycling processing centre is being built on the Old Kent Road – sadly delayed by Labour's Ken Livingstone – which once up and running will allow the council to rapidly expand recycling to include kitchen leftovers and other organic material. And we will build an environmentally friendly community heat and power plant to supply thousands of homes and businesses in and around a regenerated Elephant and Castle and Aylesbury.

The Liberal Democrats have led the way on fighting climate change. The council's 200 club has successfully helped some of the largest local carbon emitters to reduce their emissions and Southwark was one of the first boroughs to sign up to 10:10.

And since 2003 more than £25 million has been spent by Community Councils on local projects to make their areas cleaner, greener and safer. For example Liberal Democrat councillors in Bermondsey have used some of this money to fit energy saving devices and loft and wall insulation in 500 homes, reducing carbon emissions and saving hard pressed residents money on their fuel bills – a model that we think deserves expansion across the borough.

**Six actions for a greener borough.**

A Liberal Democrat council will:

1. Help people slash their carbon emissions and cut their fuel bills by offering grants for insulation, energy saving measures and access to green community energy.
2. Build a new recycling centre on the Old Kent Road so that recycling can increase by 2014 to more than 10 times the maximum level achieved under Labour - increasing recycling rates from 3.6% to more than 38%.
3. Publish plans for setting up a network of local low carbon Combined Heat and Power units to supply existing district heating schemes and work with other social housing providers and the private sector to maximise its take up.
4. Increase the opportunities for people to grow their own food by increasing the number of allotments and providing Places to Grow on housing estates.
5. Make the most of the locations of the new recycling centre and new super efficient eco friendly Combined Heat and Power plant (CHP) on the Old Kent Road by launching a plan for a Green Technology Park in the area. We will work with local employers and the universities to provide high quality 'green' apprenticeships and jobs.
6. Encourage sustainable travel options such as walking and cycling by working with Transport for London to improve safety on red routes. We will also make principal roads, where most collisions happen, safer for pedestrians and cyclists. We will build pleasant and safe 'green' routes in the borough to encourage walking and cycling and slow traffic to 20mph on all roads for which we are responsible. We will encourage smart green travel through car clubs, cycle training, additional cycle parking and charging points for electric cars.

## **A better borough**

The Liberal Democrats in Southwark will continue to make sure that we provide more efficient, more coordinated and more personalised services for our residents. Modernising the way that council staff work will ensure that better services are delivered even while funding from central government is being cut. We will improve our communications by making better use of the web, email and text messages to communicate with residents using 'new media'. This will enable residents to choose how and what information they receive.

In the last year we have moved staff from 30 different buildings around the borough into an environmentally friendly office in Tooley Street. This has saved £35 million so far and helped us freeze council tax. A Liberal Democrat council will continue to make best use of all its staff, buildings and land to drive down unnecessary costs and free up more money for providing services to residents.

Eight years ago the Liberal Democrats set up eight community councils giving them powers to take decisions on local issues such as traffic, parking, planning applications. They have successfully delivered a range of resident led improvements to parks and open spaces through the Cleaner Greener Safer fund. In the difficult times ahead they are well placed to help communities focus limited council resources on those local organisations and projects that deliver value for money services. A Liberal Democrat council will give community councils more powers and influence - including budgets to fund voluntary groups in their area. Liberal Democrats understand how simple things like improved street lighting and speedy removal of graffiti and litter make us all feel safer and a Liberal Democrat council will provide more powers and funds for Community Councils to further improve the streets where we live.

During the first 100 days of a new Liberal Democrat administration we will launch a Charter for Housing Repairs. This charter will help ensure repairs are carried out quickly, to a good standard, thoughtfully and carefully completed, are cost effective, and that they will last.

We will also ensure that everyone who receives a social care package or support will be offered an individual budget over the next 4 years and continue to support older people to live safely at home through the use of technology such as telecare and by working with organisations such as Southwark Pensioners Centre, Blackfriars Settlement, Dulwich Helpline and Southwark Circle to support their wellbeing and independence. We will also seek to protect older people's quality of life by keeping council tax down and providing freedom passes.

We are determined to rebuild trust in politics. Having ensured all councillor expenses are available on-line, we will continue to insist on the highest standards from all Liberal Democrat councillors. Every Liberal Democrat councillor will repeat their pledge to put the interests of local residents first, will keep in touch all year round and be readily accessible to their constituents. A Liberal Democrat council leader will undertake monthly walkabouts to ensure they are in touch with local issues. Each community council will have an executive

councillor sponsor – keeping the executive in touch with local issues, and giving local communities access to the executive.

Keeping people safe will remain a priority and Liberal Democrats will build on the progress made over the last eight years. Southwark Council now has a record number of community based wardens and officers and we will continue to prioritise a high profile uniformed presence to keep people safe. We will protect the *Pathways programme* which encourages teenagers away from a life of crime and lobby the Mayor to provide more bobbies on the beat by reversing this year's cut in numbers.

Six actions for a better borough:

A Liberal Democrat council will.

1. Give people more say over how their council tax is spent by handing down more local decisions and money to Community Councils.
2. Listen to and work with public and voluntary sector partners to make sure there is better delivery of services to residents. We will work together to ensure that there is more shared use of public buildings, providing more services under a single roof.
3. Work with the youth community councils to make sure that young people have plenty of opportunities to have their say, keep healthy and safe while having fun and fulfilling their potential.
4. Build on the success of the current 'Joint Team' of Southwark Council and Department for Works and Pensions officers to create a 'Senior Citizen Support Team' who will visit older residents in their home to help them with housing, money and health issues and make sure they access all the benefits and entitlements they are due.
5. Help people feel safe and tackle crime by modernising the CCTV network with mobile and state of the art digital cameras.
6. Carry on the regeneration of the borough, confirming its reputation as one of the top places for culture, art and leisure with:
  - a new leisure centre as part of the regenerated Elephant and Castle,
  - a complete overhaul of the Seven Islands leisure centre,
  - a rejuvenated Burgess Park including a sculpture park,
  - a new running track and facilities in Southwark Park in time for the Olympics
  - and continued support for local theatre, arts and culture including a diverse programme of events around the borough such as The Event in Southwark Park.

*Manifesto*  
*13<sup>th</sup> April 2010*

## **Our programme for local communities**

**Through community councils we lead we will:**

### Bermondsey

- Campaign for TfL to improve pedestrian crossings on Jamaica Road and Tower Bridge Road and curb rat running in the area.
- Clean up railway arches and bridges in Abbey Street, St James' Road and Tower Bridge Road.
- Launch a vision for the future of the Old Kent Road as a centre for green technology and lobby the mayor of London to remove the Bricklayers Arms flyover
- Work with tenants' associations to establish opportunities for growing food on estates.
- Campaign for zone 1 of the tube network to be extended to Bermondsey underground station.
- Build 650 more affordable homes.
- Work with tenants associations to improve the provision of cycle lockers and bike sheds on estates.
- Ensure a sympathetic development next to Potters Fields Park.
- Work with local businesses to make Bermondsey Street and the Blue attractive retail environments.
- Refurbish Seven Islands Leisure Centre and reopen the children's pool.

### Borough/Bankside

- Campaign for more affordable family housing.
- Campaign for a right turn off the New Kent Road into Meadow Row.
- Support the development of more community allotments and continue to improve our area through CGS programme.
- More secure cycle parking on our estates.
- Revitalise Mint Street Park for young people.
- Revitalise Dickens Square Park.
- Support tenants and residents with more security doors on blocks.
- To work with Transport for London, interested partners and residents to identify and deliver a local vision for an improved Borough High Street.

### Camberwell

- Fight to save the South London Line.
- Fund a feasibility study for a Bakerloo line extension - this is how Greenwich kick started the DLR extension to Woolwich Arsenal.
- Countdown real time bus info at all bus stops as this is the only public transport in the area and needs to be easier to use.
- Make the centre of Camberwell 20mph giving more priority for pedestrians – like the Walworth Road.
- Greendale - create a new local park or sports fields for local primary schools.
- Complete the full refurbishment of the Camberwell Leisure centre.
- Produce an area action plan for the improvement of the SE5 area.

### Dulwich

- Fight to keep the East Dulwich Police station.
- Extend the East Dulwich Crime Fighting scheme to reduce crime in Dulwich Village and College wards by investing in property marking kits and other crime prevention measures.
- Support Lordship Lane as a shopping high street by making it more shopper friendly – this will include a crossing outside Somerfield/Coop – and helping improve shop fronts.
- Rollout 20mph across Dulwich.
- Ensure activities for young people are available across the Dulwich area.
- Continue and extend our tree-planting fund, which has installed 220 new trees so far in East Dulwich alone planted where residents want them.
- New Home Insulation Fund – insulating worst offenders and cutting CO2.
- Improving public transport, cycle lanes and increasing car club support.
- Working with the Dulwich Estate to improve local accountability.

### Nunhead and Peckham Rye

- Install drainage on Peckham Rye Common, so that the community can use more of it all year round.
- Create new tree planting fund – 200 new trees, to be planted where residents want them.
- Zero Tolerance - on dog fouling, dumped waste, littering and abandoned cars
- Provide more local allotments.
- Create new Home Insulation Fund – insulating worst offenders and cutting CO2.
- Take cars off the road – using better public transport, cycle lanes and car clubs.
- Safer Roads – 20mph speed limit, review of junctions and new pedestrian crossings.
- Provide free property marking kits and small business alarms to reduce crime.
- Campaign for Transport for London to extend the 63 bus route to Honor Oak station.

### Peckham

- Fight to save the South London Line
- Support the creation of a new public square outside Peckham Rye station.
- Zero Tolerance - on dog fouling, dumped waste, littering and abandoned cars
- Lobby for conservation area in the town centre to keep the remaining historic buildings.
- Ensure Burgess Park becomes a world-class park, including facilities for different user-groups.
- We help reduce overcrowding in council housing by providing more family sized homes.

### Rotherhithe

- Refurbish Seven Islands Leisure Centre.
- Tackle traffic congestion on Jamaica Road and Lower road and campaign for more buses on routes 199, 381 and C10.
- Create new allotments and expand Southwark Park by cleaning up and integrating the former Fish Farm site.
- Campaign for a new pedestrian/cycle bridge from Rotherhithe to Canary Wharf.
- Construct new Rotherhithe secondary school and change admissions policy at Bacon's College to offer more local places to local children.
- Open up remaining parts of the Thames Path.
- Improve youth facilities by supporting plans for improvements at Docklands Settlement.
- Plant 250 new trees and continue to oppose inappropriate developments in the area.
- Regenerate Albion Street, including a new street market, investment in existing shops and preserving the library site for community or mixed use.
- Improve pedestrian crossings, particularly on Lower Road, Jamaica Road and Salter Road.

### Walworth

- Open a new secondary school in Walworth.
- Build a new Leisure Centre as part of the E&C regeneration.
- Invest in our local parks such as Pullens Gardens, Pasley Park and Nursery Row Park linking them together with green walks.
- Fight to save the old Carter Place Police station garden using it to create an open space on the Walworth Road.
- Support East Street market.
- Revitalise our streets and estates by investing in new flower and tree planting.
- Rejuvenate Burgess Park including a sculpture park