

A Safer Cleaner Town



An Effective, Listening Council

*Liberal Democrat Manifesto for
Northampton Borough Council 2003*

From the Grass Roots

Liberal Democrat Councillors keep in touch with the people they represent, year in, year out, by FOCUS community newsletters. In September 2002, our councillors used their experience of listening to local concerns to identify six key issues that time and again people said the council should be addressing.



From October through to December, we invited people to tell us how they would rank these six key issues in order of priority. Over 25,000 leaflets were individually delivered, producing a response over 10 times the size of the response to the councils own budget consultation. This is the order people put our priorities for Northampton Borough Council.

- (1) Tackling street crime and antisocial behaviour**
- (2) Tackling graffiti and cleanliness of the streets**
- (3) Protect Green fields from development**
- (4) Improving Public Transport**
- (5) Protect the environment by recycling waste**
- (6) Cut the numbers of council houses standing empty**

In our manifesto, we address each of these issues in turn. Local Government budgets are tightly controlled by central government regulation. Small increases in budgets can produce large percentage increases in council tax, and the Borough Council's powers are limited. So we have set our proposals in two time frames.

Short Term: Things we can do within a year of taking control of the council.

Long Term: Things we would plan to achieve within 4 years, dependent on the constantly uncertain financial position of the council. Some may require national legislation and a change of government.

We then look at Northampton Town Centre, the commercial heart of our town, and a key area of concern.

Finally, we spell out how the Liberal Democrats would run the council. How we would create a more outward looking council, that listens and responds to the everyday concerns of Northampton residents, plans for the long term, and sets clear objectives based upon public needs.

The Labour administration of our town has no clear vision for our town and no new ideas to offer. The Liberal Democrats replaced the Tories as the opposition on Northampton Borough Council 8 years ago. It's the Liberal Democrats who offer the alternative ideas, and are now ready to offer democratic leadership.

Richard Church
Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group
Northampton Borough Council

Let's clean up Northampton

Tackling Graffiti and improving the cleanliness of the streets

Too many people feel that Northampton's streets are dirty and unsightly. There's too much litter, too much graffiti, rubbish is dumped in public places and cars are left abandoned.

A minority of residents do not accept personal responsibility for the harm they cause to the quality of life of others. Recognising such personal responsibility is essential in a Liberal society. Graffiti is not just an eyesore, it reduces peoples sense of safety and security. Preventing and removing it is therefore a priority.

- ✓ Liberal Democrats support the current 'Cleaner Greener Northampton' campaign. Our councillors have supported specific initiatives to clean up public areas suffering from fly-tipping in Headlands and Kingsthorpe. We welcome the council's efforts to achieve successful prosecutions against fly tippers.

Short term

- ✓ We will not implement plans to introduce a charge on the removal of graffiti where it creates a public eyesore. We will maintain the current free service to remove graffiti, but we will expect commercial property owners to take reasonable precautions to protect their property from graffiti.
- ✓ We will not introduce Labour's proposed charge for the collection of unwanted white good (fridges etc.)
- ✓ We will seek agreements with retailers to prevent the sale of aerosol paints to people under the age of 16.
- ✓ We will ensure that all racist, homophobic or otherwise offensive graffiti is removed within one working day in public places.
- ✓ We will introduce a graffiti & vandalism 'hotline' for public use, and use the Area Partnerships to identify and prioritise 'hotspots' of litter.

Long Term

- ✓ We will give priority to increasing the provision for graffiti removal to ensure that the council has a permanent, full time team working to remove graffiti.
- ✓ We will review the charge for the collection of unwanted cars, and consider the impact of the reduced charge of £20 introduced by Lib Dem run Milton Keynes.

Target: By May 2007, ensure that all graffiti in prominent public view is removed within 7 days of being reported and property owners consent given.

Target: Public satisfaction with the cleanliness of the streets will be in the top quarter of similar councils by May 2007 (measured by the Audit Commission as in the bottom quarter in July 2002).

- ✓ We will investigate the introduction of graffiti walls, designated for young people to use for graffiti, and consult on their location through the area partnerships.
- ✓ We will campaign for legislation (as already proposed by Liberal Democrat MP's) for a ban on the sale of aerosol paint to people under 16.
- ✓ We will ensure better co-ordination between all agencies concerned with the removal of untaxed and abandoned vehicles. We support the introduction of the 'manufacturer pays' principle for recovering the costs of disposing and recycling of cars and white goods at the end of their useful life.
- ✓ We will employ a team of neighbourhood wardens to deal with all issues relating to the street environment (see section on Street Crime and anti-social behaviour).

"fly tipping and abandoned vehicles are widespread and are not removed as promptly as in some councils and education is not delivered in a structured way".

"Fly tipping and abandoned vehicles detract from the otherwise tidy town environment. The council is relatively slow to respond to these incidents".

**Audit Commission report on
Northampton Borough Council July 2002**

Tackling Street Crime and anti social behaviour

The number one priority for Northampton residents.

Both our own survey, and the survey conducted by the council and others in drawing up the Northampton Community Strategy puts this issue clearly at the top.

Tackling Crime and anti-social behaviour is an issue for each and every one of us, as individuals going about our daily lives, as well as public bodies looking for solutions. The council, working with local communities, the police, the government and others has their part to play.

Liberal Democrats believe in strong, supportive communities within which people feel safe and free.

Three needs identified by the Northampton Community Safety Partnership to reduce crime and the fear of crime:

1. *Environmental damage/ disarray resulting in an area feeling unsafe.*
2. *Improved public transport.*
3. *Improved access to activities for young people*

Short Term

- ✓ We will support multi agency initiatives to tackle particular community safety problems. **CASPAR** is an example of just such an initiative aimed at estates with particular crime problems. We will support an extend Caspar projects.
- ✓ **Neighbourhood wardens:** We will ensure that an existing member of the council's staff, already dealing with neighbourhood issues, is identified as a neighbourhood warden for each area partnership to assist in identifying community safety and environmental issues and work with the community and other agencies to find solutions. The County Council has an important role to play through Social Services and Education, and we would press for them and the Primary Care Trusts to identify a similar individual from their existing staff to form multi-agency teams for each partnership area to support the existing Police Community Beat Officers. Community Safety cuts across a whole range of public services. Our proposal would enable better co-ordination of community safety initiatives and better links with the local community.
- ✓ We will ensure that the needs of vulnerable groups: women, ethnic minorities, elderly people and the gay community are appreciated in improving community safety. We will seek to involve members from vulnerable communities in area partnerships to enable their voice to be heard.

Long Term

- ✓ We will develop our proposed network of neighbourhood wardens to become dedicated specialist staff, accountable to area partnerships, to deal with all issues relating to the street environment (street cleaning, fly tipping, neighbourhood nuisance, street crime etc.) to work with the Police Community Beat Officers, to identify and seek solutions to local problems of neighbourhood nuisance. They would investigate complaints and inspect the delivery of environmental services in their communities. As resources permit, we would expand the initiative to an individual ward level.

Target: To have in place a dedicated team of neighbourhood wardens, at least at area partnership level, by May 2007.

- ✓ We will ensure that council owned community centres make their facilities open to use by young people.
- ✓ We will seek a partnership scheme with the County Council to support detached and voluntary youth work.
- ✓ We will provide appropriate facilities for skateboarding and public shelters for young people to meet in consultation with local communities and with consideration of the noise implications. We would seek sponsorship for such projects.
- ✓ We will introduce trial tenancies for new council tenants conditional upon respect for neighbours.
- ✓ We will seek the introduction of Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (pioneered by Lib Dem Islington) as an alternative to the excessively bureaucratic Anti-social behaviour orders.
- ✓ We would promote neighbourhood watch, and seek to extend its remit to liaise with neighbourhood wardens on issues concerning the local environment.
- ✓ We would promote 'alleygator' schemes to protect rear access roads, and press for more advice and assistance to residents on their implementation.

Protect the Environment by recycling more waste

What happens to the rubbish we put out every week? The vast majority ends up as landfill, despoiling the countryside, polluting our water, and adding to the greenhouse gases that are changing our climate.

The UK has one of the worst records in Europe in recycling waste, but we need to start by reducing waste. Too much of what we buy comes with excessive and non-returnable packaging. We need to reduce, reuse, and then recycle waste.

Northampton recycles just 13% of household waste. Daventry recycles 40%.

The government has set a target for 24% of Northampton's household waste to be recycled by 2003/4 and 36% by 2005/6. A recent bid to the government for extra funding to expand the kerbside recycling scheme has failed, so without the substantial investment needed to increase recycling, this target will not be reached.

All publications produced by Northampton Liberal Democrats (including this document) are produced on recycled paper.

"The council does not recycle waste from its own street cleaning operations. This is a missed opportunity to demonstrate leadership in this area and set a good example"

Audit Commission July 2002

Short Term

- ✓ We will seek alternative ways (including a further bid for grants) to secure funding to introduce the kerbside collection of waste for recycling, and we will ensure that funding is available for the running costs projected for subsequent years.
- ✓ We will ensure that the council has adopted best practice in terms of its own use and re-use of recycled products.
- ✓ We share the widespread concerns that the site at Wooton for processing waste for recycling is not appropriate, and call for an independent study of the environmental implication for nearby householders.
- ✓ We will launch an education campaign on recycling and reducing waste in schools, and work with schools to identify sites for neighbourhood recycling centres that include facilities for bottles, plastics and clothing.

Long Term

- ✓ We will not support the incineration of waste unless every opportunity to recycle has been explored, that is proven to be safe, and that it does not require the importation of waste over long distances, and that it is used for power generation.

Target: We will meet the government target of 36% of waste recycled by May 2007.

- ✓ We will introduce a periodic garden waste collection service. People with small gardens and no cars find it difficult to dispose of garden waste, which can be collected, shredded, and made available at convenient locations in the community as a garden mulch.

Target: A Liberal Democrat Council will aim to be one of the top 10% of councils for recycling.

- ✓ We will campaign for measures to remove excessive packaging, and require supermarkets to provide recycling receptacles in their stores for unwanted packaging. We will promote more direct sale of goods by the producer to the consumer to enable waste to be reduced (see farmers markets and allotments).

"In Northampton there are eight wards within the 20% most deprived in the country, representing 36.8% of Northampton's population".

Indices of Deprivation 2000 (Housing component)

Cut the number of Council houses standing empty

With 14,000 properties, the Council is far and away the biggest landlord in the town, providing housing for people who cannot afford to buy, or who have special needs.

Every house empty means another family is on the waiting list, in inadequate accommodation. Every house standing empty is also another eyesore, a target for vandalism and crime and a loss of rent income.

Irresponsible tenants leave too many council houses in appalling condition, and many are in areas that need substantial investment to bring them up to satisfactory standards.

Short Term

- ✓ A Liberal Democrat Council will introduce Trial Tenancies for new tenants, to check for good behaviour towards neighbours, and good care of the property.
- ✓ We will ensure that a tenant's charter setting out the rights and responsibilities of tenants in keeping a property in good condition and in having respect for the neighbourhood is adopted and understood. We would encourage other social and private landlords to do likewise.
- ✓ We will examine the experience elsewhere in the country prior to introducing Choice based lettings. This will enable potential tenants to bid for a particular property advertised to let. Their application will be determined using clearly established criteria based upon their needs and their record. This puts the tenant in the driving seat in choosing their property, increasing choice and increasing the opportunity to let 'hard to let' properties.
- ✓ We will establish multi-skilled teams to tackle empty properties in poor condition, enabling speedier refurbishment and re-letting.

Long Term

We believe that the council should continue to have a role in the provision of social housing. The long term financial position of the council's Housing Revenue Budget, coupled with the need to invest in improving our housing stock, will mean the council must reconsider the way our housing is owned and managed. At all times, the needs of our tenants must be paramount. Options include partial or whole scale transfer to housing associations or arms length management companies. We will ensure that:

- Any transfer is in the best long-term interest of the tenants in terms of their costs and the quality of service they get.
 - That there is maximum tenant involvement in the new management arrangements.
 - That the new arrangement ensures that housing for people with special needs (including elderly and disabled people), is not sold to the private sector.
 - That the new arrangements enable more capital to be raised for major repairs and rebuilding.
 - That the tenants have the final say in a referendum
-
- ✓ We will seek to increase the percentage of affordable housing required in new developments above the present 22%.
 - ✓ We will seek to prevent the inappropriate mix of young and elderly tenants in former sheltered accommodation.

The Borough Council's housing service has been rated poor and received 'no stars' from the Best Value Inspection Service. The service was criticised because repairs took a long time and the council did not do enough to ensure they were up to an acceptable standard.

The Government must free up housing finance. Councils should be free to determine if properties can be sold to tenants, and they should be free to use the receipts from council house sales to invest in new or existing stock.

Protect green fields and open spaces from development

In the last 4 years residents have fought off threats on greenfield development around the town. The Council only turned down proposals for development at Dallington Heath after a massive campaign by nearby residents. The Labour controlled County Council is still pressing for the Buckton Fields site near Whitehills to be developed, and development around Milton Malsor has been prevented by objections to the County Structure Plan.

The town is now faced by a new threat to our green spaces by the Milton Keynes and South Midlands Planning Study, which plans up to 49,000 houses, a 60% growth in the number of properties, in and around Northampton over the next 30 years. This means that all the past battles over green field development will have to be fought again, together with many more.

The all-party consensus on opposing the urban expansion of Northampton into neighbouring districts broke down when Labour councillors voted down a Lib Dem motion to confirm the previous consensus.

Short Term

- ✓ A Liberal Democrat Council will, within a month of taking office, make clear our opposition to urban development on green fields adjacent to the Borough boundary. We will speak on behalf of the overwhelming majority of Northampton residents when we make our views on this matter clear to the government.
- ✓ We support the Lifespace project, to create environmentally sustainable development on disused land in Ransome Road, Delapre, together with a major new public attraction promoting the environment and the restoration of Delapre Abbey.

Long Term

Ultimately, the government has the final say on the additional development to be imposed on our area.

Whatever the outcome, we will work to get the best deal for Northampton's citizens, including the investment in public services, public transport and infrastructure that further expansion will require.

- ✓ We will press for more development on brownfield sites, to bring waste land back into use, to restore and reuse older properties for housing in order to meet government targets of 60% of housing on brownfield sites. This target will not be achievable if too much development is imposed upon Northampton.

The 1998 floods were defined as a one in 75 year event. New flood prevention measures are designed to provide one in 200 year protection. We will press for a strategic flood assessment, funded by the Environment Agency, not council taxpayers. No new development should be permitted which jeopardised existing flood prevention standards.

New developments need to be high density and high quality, with properly planned areas of public open space.

- ✓ We will work to improve the river frontage as a corridor for walking, cycling leisure and wildlife.
- ✓ We will retain disused allotment land for alternative open space uses (eg. Play areas). We will promote self-management of allotments and encourage the sale of organically grown produce. We will promote the take up of allotments with the option of short-term summer lets on pre-prepared ground.

Northampton needs a protected green belt to prevent further development. If new development is imposed against our wishes on the fringes of our town, the Borough boundary needs to be altered to include it within the town.

The Government needs to re-direct investment and development to regions with high unemployment and deprivation, where there is ample brownfield land for development.

The Government needs to introduce a Greenfield Development tax, and to end VAT on the refurbishment and restoration of brownfield land and old properties for housing.

Improving Public Transport

Public Transport has declined under Labour. Northampton has lost long established bus routes, while rail services to Northampton have remained inadequate and become more unreliable. Public Transport is key to other priorities to create safer and more sustainable environments. We need an integrated public transport network which enables cross subsidy between profitable routes and routes that provide an important community service.

Short Term

- ✓ We will continue the short-term subsidy to retain the bus services to Parklands
- ✓ We will press for the introduction of a Quality Bus Partnership, enabling the council to issue a single contract for co-ordinated bus services throughout the town with a guarantee of service quality, enabling cross subsidy of non-profitable routes.

Long Term

Developer funding for public transport should be used to support overall public transport provision in the town.

- ✓ We will support the demolition of the bus station, and its replacement with a new modern facility to provide a welcoming and comfortable environment for bus users.
- ✓ We will seek the introduction of electronic real time information on buses at bus stops.
- ✓ We will promote park and ride systems to reduce congestion and provide fast, regular bus connections to the town centre. We will seek the use of the Cattle market for park and ride, combined with its re-use as a farmers market.



New bus lanes on the main arterial routes to the town centre must be combined with measures, such as park and ride, to ensure they do not cause more congestion.

- ✓ We will seek the use of disused railways for public transport, and support the re-opening of the Northampton to Bedford line.
- ✓ We will complete the inadequate and patchy cycle network in the town. We will promote the canal and the river for more leisurely transport.

The Government must reform bus deregulation legislation to enable councils to provide bus services where the private sector has failed, and to enable new operators to compete with the few major established providers.

The West Coast Mainline and the Northampton Loop must be upgraded to provide a fast and efficient inter city service to Northampton Castle station.

- ✓ We will encourage pupils to use alternatives to car transport to school, promoting use of buses, and encouraging cycling and walking through the 'Safer Routes to School' programme.
- ✓ We will study the implementation of the Car Share scheme introduced by the Liberal Democrats in Milton Keynes with a view to its trial in Northampton.

A Thriving Town Centre

As the commercial and cultural heart of our town, a thriving town centre is essential to the vitality of our town. The centre needs to change with the times, while maintaining a character established by centuries of human activity. There are real threats to our town centre, but there are opportunities too. Traffic congestion, poor parking, and an inadequate range of facilities will drive shoppers elsewhere. A pleasant pedestrian environment and high quality leisure will encourage people to stay.

Chewing Gum

Gum on pavements is ugly, it is a nuisance for shoppers and retailers and this year is costing council taxpayers £23,000 for its removal. We will introduce a 'chewing gum board' for people to deposit their unwanted gum.

Parking

Labour, with Conservative support, introduced the TOPPS parking regulations in the town centre in a ham-fisted way that caused deep resentment with town centre users. The consultation and publicity in advance was inadequate, with no phased introduction. Liberal Democrats opposed the introduction of on street parking charges. The County Council now threatens to take over the administration of TOPPS, we will press to ensure that any income from TOPPS in our town is spent only on traffic schemes within Northampton.

- ✓ We will introduce a fairer and more equitable charging system for town centre car parks. The current 'pay and display' system should be replaced with a 'Pay on Foot' scheme, enabling people to pay as they leave a car park, depending on the length of their stay. Car Park users would pay for the duration of their use, rather than worrying how long they were going to be in town as they park.
- ✓ We would promote the use of park and ride, particularly for long stay users, using Sixfields and the Cattle Market site and seeking new sites on the northern edge of the town.
- ✓ We support plans to expand the Grosvenor Centre and replace the ugly bus station with a high quality user-friendly bus station.

The Market Square

The covered market has outlived its useful life. It should be sold for redevelopment and the proceeds from the sale used to improve facilities for market stalls and their customers. Trade on the open market is clearly threatened by competition from supermarket shopping. Northampton's Market Square is the largest centrally placed traditional market square in England. Currently, it is used for market trading and nothing else, but its potential attraction as an open space for a whole range of uses is enormous.

The report 'Northampton Market- A Positive Future in a Changing World' proposes that a permanent cover should be put on at least part of the square to provide a better environment for shoppers, but its not the only answer. Other possibilities may involve reducing the number of market stalls or removing the stalls entirely to a new location. There is a potential for the use of the square for open-air entertainment and as a place for people to relax in street cafes. We should look to Europe to see how town squares can be used.

- ✓ We will develop several options for the market square, and put them to the public in a referendum.
- ✓ We will promote markets at appropriate locations for farmers and allotment holders to sell produce, thereby promoting healthy eating and the use of our allotments.

The council must continue to support arts and culture in the town centre through the theatres and the museum.

- ✓ We will press for improvements to remove 'gridlock' at the gas works roundabout.

Visitor Information

Moving the award winning Tourist Information Centre out of Mr Grants House and into the museum was a foolish mistake that now cannot be reversed. Three years ago, the County Council closed the Countryside Information Centre in Guildhall Road. We will work with the County Council to develop a 'One Stop Shop' for information for visitors and local residents on attractions in the town and county.

Running the Council

In 2001, a highly critical report prepared by the Local Government Improvement and Development Agency into Northampton Borough Council called for far reaching changes in the way the council is run. Making these changes will be key to delivering the priorities of this manifesto.

For too long, the council has been preoccupied with achieving unitary and city status.

- ✓ Liberal Democrats support unitary status for Northampton, but we will seek it only the context of a government (or regional) review of the structure and organisation of local government.

The council needs to work to a clear direction from the elected councillors, and depending on the result of the election, we will work with others to ensure that this direction is in place. The political direction needs to be supported by the corporate leadership of the council to ensure that direction is clearly understood by the many excellent officers working at all levels of the council.

“...the council must now stop looking backwards and start to look forwards and develop a clear vision for the authority and realistic plans that map out how this will be achieved.”

“...the council has no corporate plan that clearly identifies what it intends to do, who will do it and when it will be done...”

“...The absence of priorities makes resource allocation difficult and has led to a position where too many initiatives are started without the necessary plans or resources to meet their objectives”.

**Improvement and Development Agency
visit to Northampton Borough Council.**

Having priorities means taking tough decisions on lower priorities. Councillors of all parties have already identified leisure facilities as a low priority. Leisure is an increasingly commercial field, where services need to be supported by charges, while providing adequate concessions to people with particular needs.

Sixfields costs the council £400,000 a year to run, and is used primarily for commercial purposes.

- ✓ Liberal Democrats support the disposal of Sixfields to enable private investment to expand and improve the stadium.

As in previous years, the current three-year rolling budget shows substantial deficits in years two and three. Lack of long term financial planning means these long-term problems are never addressed, leading to short-term decisions and high council tax rises.

The Government has massively increased the bureaucratic load on the council with Best Value, endless performance measurement and most recently the Comprehensive Performance Assessment. All of these requirements tie up officer time and council taxpayers money that could be better spent on delivering the council's priorities. **It's time central government got off the back of local government.**

The council must be a beacon of best practice in the way it treats its own staff, and in the way councillors treat each other and the staff. Practices and procedures must be regularly reviewed to identify and remove discrimination in employment practices or in the delivery of services.

Procedures must be put in place to ensure that complaints of bullying by councillors are taken as seriously as complaints against members of staff.

- ✓ A Liberal Democrat Government would give local government more freedom by abolishing the council tax, replacing it with a local income tax, enabling councils to collect more of their own income with a corresponding cut in national income tax.
- ✓ In government, we would hand more power to the voter by replacing the antiquated first past the post system with the more proportional Single Transferable Vote, enabling every vote to contribute to the election of a councillor, and ensuring that there are no single party safe seats.

Closer to the people

A council that fails to consult and inform local people will fail. Labour has always run the council with a 'we know best' attitude. Too often, consulting the public has appeared to be either a token gesture, or has failed to present real choices. Councillors end up accusing the public of being apathetic, while the public feel the council is remote.

Area Partnerships

Liberal Democrats first proposed the introduction of area committees over 10 years ago. Labour repeatedly rejected the idea before introducing them two years ago. Despite considerable cynicism at their outset, they have already achieved remarkable successes, providing direct public input into issues ranging from the detail of the design of traffic schemes, to effective protests on bus services and planning applications.

Liberal Democrats will develop and strengthen the role of Area Partnerships by:

- ✓ Enabling partnerships to fund specific community projects through a community projects fund held centrally and allocated fairly to each area partnership by the council executive.
- ✓ Give Area Partnerships the right to comment on planning and license applications in their area.
- ✓ Strengthen the reporting and feedback of Area Partnership minutes.
- ✓ Use neighbourhood wardens as key contact points for area partnerships on issues affecting the area.
- ✓ Create Area web-sites to be used as a notice board for activities and issues in the area.

Forums

Special interest forums; the women's, racial equality, disabled peoples, youth, pensioners and lesbian, gay & bisexual Forum have played a useful role, but many now struggle to attract more than a tiny handful of people.

- ✓ We will review the operation of forums to ensure the forum members are able to take the lead and take full control of the agendas.
- ✓ We will seek additional ways of involving the people the Forums represent and consult on the introduction of a Student Forum and an Environment Forum.

Consultation

Too often, the council pretends to consult without offering real choices.

We would:

- ✓ Consult on the annual budget by offering clear options in terms of levels of council tax and public services.
- ✓ Consult on projects such as the market square by setting out the current situation, and setting out alternative visions of the future of the market, and enable the public to express their view.
- ✓ Review the publication of 'Northampton Today' to ensure it more effectively communicates useful information and encourages feedback.
- ✓ Promote use of the Internet to encourage greater public feedback and debate between councillors and members of the public. We would look to publish committee minutes, agendas and planning applications on the web.

Scrutiny

Liberal Democrats opposed the creation of a powerful one party cabinet, with other councillors serving on Overview and Scrutiny Committees. National legislation has required the council to work in this way, but we would take action to ensure Overview & Scrutiny Committees have more input before, not after council policy is determined.

- ✓ We would strengthen officer support for scrutiny, and ensure that it is pre-emptive and pro-active, not simply reactive to issues already determined by the executive.

Time for a Change

It's time for a change on Northampton Borough Council. Labour have been in power for 12 years, they've had their chance.

- ↓ They have neglected the state of the town's streets. Northampton is uglier and dirtier than when Labour took power.
- ↓ They have failed to listen, leading to the mess over town centre parking.
- ↓ They have failed to manage council finances for the long term, leading to hefty council tax rises this year, and maybe in future years.
- ↓ They have wasted money on costly pet projects, such as the failed Millennium Strand bid, the Rapid Transit System that never happened, and All Saints Square.

Vision For Northampton in 2012

"In 2012 Northampton will be a safe, clean and healthy town with an excellent environment, facilities and services..."

*Northampton Community Strategy
June 2002*

Liberal Democrats share this vision,
and we have the policies to make it a
reality

Liberal Democrats offer a break with the past, working with Northampton people to create a new vision for our town.

Three Reasons to vote Liberal Democrat

- ✓ For safer, cleaner neighbourhoods.
- ✓ For a council that listens, putting honest choices to the public.
- ✓ For value for money services.

I support the Liberal Democrat plans for Northampton

I would like to join the Liberal Democrats

I would like to help the Liberal Democrat campaign

Name.....

Address.....

Tel. No:..... E-Mail.....



Return to: Northampton Liberal Democrats, FREEPOST NH0482, Northampton NN1 3BR