

# DEMAND BETTER FOR NORTH SOMERSET

**Our manifesto  
for 2023-2027**

***North Somerset  
Liberal Democrats***

Liberal   
Democrats



## **Demand Better for North Somerset**

The North Somerset Liberal Democrats are a passionate and dedicated group of councillors and campaigners who work tirelessly throughout the year to demand better for residents in North Somerset. We understand the unique needs and concerns of the community and are committed to delivering results that will improve the lives of every resident.

## **Contents**

- 4      Our “Focus Five” for North Somerset**
- 6      Investing in a safer North Somerset**
- 8      Making North Somerset the best place to grow up**
- 10     Delivering green and inclusive growth**
- 12     Protecting our environment**
- 14     Looking after your money and protecting frontline services**
- 16     Improving opportunities for healthier lives**
- 18     Providing high quality, affordable housing**
- 20     Placemaking and economic growth**
- 22     Our record on the council**



# Our “Focus Five”

**North Somerset Liberal Democrats will prioritise these five areas in the new council to deliver for local people:**

## **Children and Young People - Making North Somerset the best place to grow up**

- Create timed 20mph zones around all schools, supported by the 20's Plenty safety campaign
- Improving our special education needs and disabilities service by increasing Special Educational Needs and Disability, and Mental Health Capacity within North Somerset.

## **Crime and Community Safety - Investing in a safer North Somerset**

- Establish a Crime Prevention Fund for all wards
- Invest in ward-level social prescribing to tackle loneliness and isolation

## **Economy and Jobs - Delivering green and inclusive economic growth**

- Drive investment in towns and villages across North Somerset to increase job opportunities for locals and expand the number of available apprenticeships and training opportunities
- Supporting High Streets and town and village centres to keep communities alive and sustain liveable communities.
- Transform the Tropicana and Birnbeck Pier into nationally recognised venues and attractions.
- Campaign for central government to reform business rates to help small enterprises establish themselves and thrive with ease
- Supporting High Streets and town and village centres to sustain liveable communities.

## **Environment, Transport, and Net Zero - Protecting the environment and reaching net zero by 2030**

- Deliver North Somerset's Climate Change Action Plan to create a carbon-neutral council and area by 2030.
- Support a public-private partnership to generate tidal electricity and create a micro-grid using renewable energy
- Plant more trees and flowers throughout the community to tackle air pollution
- Improve and repair roads and footpaths to encourage the use of sustainable transport such as cycling and walking, including delivery of the Pier-to-Pier Cycle Path, the Gordano Greenway, and the Strawberry Line extension to Wrington and Blagdon.
- Encourage environmentally friendly waste disposal by installing 100 more litter bins across North Somerset to tackle littering in our communities and running a district-wide spring clean every year to support volunteers, community groups and businesses who do their bit to keep North Somerset clean and green.
- Press the Environment Agency to improve flood defences and urban sustainable drainage

## **Housing - Providing high-quality, affordable housing for all residents**

- Increase the rate of affordable homebuilding in North Somerset, building on our success in applying for Housing Infrastructure Funds.
- Target additional funding to improve home energy efficiency helping save residents money on heating bills.
- Support rough sleepers, the homeless, and those at risk of homelessness through a 'housing first' approach
- Undertake a review of council planning procedures and resources to restore credibility to the process and ensure that all planning applications are properly and effectively assessed and determined within eight weeks
- Introduce a North Somerset Wide Licensing Scheme to replicate the success of the Weston Central Licensing Scheme at improving the quality of housing stock in the private rental sector.
- Empowering Town and Parish Councils to develop neighbourhood plans that better represent North Somerset's Town & villages' ambitions and aspirations for future growth.



## Investing in a safer North Somerset

North Somerset Liberal Democrats will help to deliver projects that make North Somerset a safer place to live, work and .

- The Liberal Democrats will invest in safer communities by expanding neighbourhood enforcement, establishing a Crime Prevention Fund for all wards, and securing Purple Flag accreditation for improved town centers.
- We will ensure that a Community Hub is in every ward, with funding available to support them to be sustained in the community.
- Additionally, we will invest in ward-level social prescribing to tackle loneliness and isolation, and work with partners to make our communities dementia friendly.
- Our priorities are to create safer, more connected, and supportive communities. We believe in investing in our neighbourhoods and providing resources to prevent crime and promote well-being. Vote for us to build a brighter future for our towns and villages.





## **Making North Somerset the best place to grow up**

**North Somerset Liberal Democrats will deliver  
better futures for our children and young people.**

- **To prioritize the safety of children and young people, we will create timed 20mph zones around all schools, supported by the 20's Plenty safety campaign.**
- **We will improve our special education needs and disabilities service by increasing Special Educations Needs and Disability, and Mental Health Capacity within North Somerset.**
- **We will invest in special educational needs and disabilities by building a new special school in North Somerset, improving assessments and support services.**
- **We will collaborate with mental health services to provide stronger CAMHS services for vulnerable children and young people.**
- **We will support children's centres and other early intervention services to give children the best start in life.**
- **Council Tax relief will be provided to foster carers and care leavers in their first year.**
- **We will make fair funding for schools a lobbying priority of the Council, advocating for more funding.**





## Delivering green and inclusive economic growth

North Somerset Liberal Democrats will help create local jobs and boost our economy.

- The Liberal Democrats are committed to delivering green and inclusive economic growth in North Somerset. Our focus is on developing Junction 21 of the M5 (West of England Enterprise Zone) and supporting economic development around the Portishead Line.
- We support a public-private partnership for tidal electricity generation along the River Severn, decarbonising council assets, investing in unlocking employment opportunities, continuing to support economic development around the Portishead Line, and attracting businesses through rate reductions.
- Our party will drive investment in towns across North Somerset to increase job opportunities for locals and expand the number of available apprenticeships and training opportunities.
- In addition, we will establish an independent destination management organization to promote and manage tourism in North Somerset, and we will introduce a new approach to parking.
- We will explore joining the West of England Combined Authority to benefit from enhanced central government funding and improve joint working with neighbouring councils.
- Our party is committed to encouraging council suppliers to pay their staff the real living wage. We will set an example to local employers by ensuring all council directly-employed staff are paid at least the real living wage.
- Furthermore, we will bring new life to the Tropicana by investing in transforming it into a conference and music venue that will support our visitor economy and tourism industry.
- We will campaign for the central government to reform business rates to help small enterprises establish themselves and thrive with ease.
- We will encourage the council - and its directly contracted suppliers - to employ local people, create apprenticeships and contribute local value from all projects. We will seek to prioritise local North Somerset suppliers in contract awards where this is possible.





# Protecting our environment

**North Somerset Liberal Democrats will protect our environment and help to tackle climate change.**

- The Liberal Democrats are dedicated to protecting the environment and delivering a carbon-neutral council and area by 2030. We believe that a healthy environment is fundamental to the well-being and prosperity of our community. Therefore, we are committed to taking action to ensure a greener and more sustainable future for all.
- One of our key commitments is to support a public-private partnership to generate tidal electricity and create a micro-grid using renewable energy. This will not only provide environmentally friendly energy but it will also create job opportunities and stimulate economic growth. We will work in conjunction with other authorities to ensure that the project is successful.
- We also pledge to prohibit the use of council land for fracking under any circumstances. Fracking is known to have significant environmental and health risks, and we believe that protecting our environment and public health is of utmost importance. We will protect our community from the potential damage that fracking can cause.
- To tackle air pollution, we will plant more trees and flowers throughout the community. We believe that this will not only improve air quality but will also beautify our neighbourhoods. Additionally, we will invest additional resources into improving and repairing roads and footpaths to encourage the use of sustainable transportation such as cycling and walking.
- We understand that waste disposal is a significant problem that has a big impact on the environment. We will improve waste disposal by installing 100 more litter bins across North Somerset to tackle littering in our communities and running a district-wide spring clean every year to support volunteers, community groups and businesses who do their bit to keep North Somerset clean and green.
- Fly-tipping and illegal parking are problems that have a detrimental effect on the environment and community. To tackle these issues, we will create a new street environment service, giving it the funding and powers needed to reduce fly-tipping and enforce against illegal parking. This service will ensure that our community remains clean and free from pollution.
- We will plant a quarter of a million flower bulbs across our towns and villages. This will not only beautify our neighbourhoods but will also provide a habitat for bees and other pollinators that are essential to our ecosystem.
- Finally, we will press the Environment Agency to improve flood defences and urban sustainable drainage. Climate change has led to an increase in flooding in our community, and we believe that immediate action is necessary to protect our community from the impact of flooding.



## Looking after your money and protecting frontline services

North Somerset Liberal Democrats will always remember it is your money and make sure that basic, frontline services are protected.

- Despite unfair funding from central government, North Somerset Liberal Democrats are committed to promoting openness, fairness, and greenness in Finance and Corporate Services. We prioritize social care and investing in frontline services to create a supportive environment for everyone. We will work collaboratively with local residents to understand their needs and interests, we allocate resources fairly and efficiently.
- We recognise the transformative role the council's purchasing power can have for local SMEs, which is why we seek to adopt a 'small, good, and local business procurement strategy' that recognises the significant benefits of procuring from local small businesses when tendering for goods and services and looks to promote the values of the West of England Good Employment Charter.
- Additionally, we focus on creating a cleaner, greener, and smarter community by investing in green energy, reducing the council's carbon footprint, and promoting sustainable transportation options.
- Our top priority is to provide excellent services that are tailored to the needs of our residents. In order to achieve this, we will be increasing our investment in the Council's frontline services, such as healthcare to ensure that our residents are getting the best possible care. Additionally, we will be streamlining our management structure to ensure that we are able to respond more quickly to the needs of our community.
- Another key area of focus for us is protecting the environment. We are committed to encouraging environmentally-friendly disposal of green waste, which is why we will be providing the first green waste bin free of charge. We will also be ensuring that recycling boxes, lids, and nets are also free, to make it as easy as possible for our residents to recycle.
- Ultimately, our goal is to create a more sustainable and responsive local government that truly serves the needs of our community. We believe that by prioritising the needs of our residents and protecting the environment, we can create a brighter future for all of us.





## Improving opportunities for healthier lives

North Somerset Liberal Democrats will deliver local health and social care services that help enable local people to live healthier and happier lifestyles.

- We believe that the health and wellbeing of our residents is a top priority. We recognise that good health is not only important for individuals and their families, but also for the wider community, as it leads to a stronger, happier, and more resilient society.
- To this end, we are committed to addressing a number of key issues to improve the health and wellbeing of our residents:
- **Mental Health:** We will work to improve mental health in schools by ensuring that all primary and secondary schools have Mental Health First Aid qualified members of staff. We will also work with mental health services to ensure that stronger CAMHS services are in place for vulnerable children and young people.
- **Leisure and Recreation:** We believe that leisure and recreation facilities are essential for promoting a healthy community. We will build on existing facilities by providing further activities and facilities to promote a healthy North Somerset. This will include promoting healthy activities across all age groups, such as cycle tracks and walking routes, while providing adequate resting places.
- **Collaboration:** We acknowledge that improving health and wellbeing requires collaboration across various sectors. We will work with the NHS and social care services to find ways to integrate their work with that of local councils and community groups. This will help to ensure that we are all working towards the same goals and that our efforts are complementary.
- **Community Support:** We recognise that many people require additional support to maintain good health and wellbeing. In the absence of funding from the government, we will facilitate the creation of groups to support both physical and mental health. This will provide a space for people to come together and support each other in their wellness journey.
- **Green Spaces:** We believe that green spaces are essential for promoting physical activity and wellbeing. To ensure that our parks and green spaces are accessible and provide excellent provision of sports, leisure, and physical play opportunities for children and adults, we will assess every green space and park in North Somerset.
- We are committed to improving adult social care services in North Somerset, while also ensuring that funding for mental health is given equal priority as physical illness. We recognise the rising costs of social care and will explore options such as a social care precept to address these costs.
- We will also invest in technologically enabled care, including assistive technology, to support healthy aging. The Liberal Democrats aim to prioritise the well-being of our residents and ensure that everyone has access to high-quality social care services.





## Providing high quality, affordable housing

North Somerset Liberal Democrats will help to deliver the affordable and sustainable housing our community needs for the future.

- At the heart of our local election manifesto is the belief that everyone should have access to high-quality, affordable housing. We are committed to ensuring that North Somerset has the homes it needs, built to the highest standards and including the necessary infrastructure to support thriving, mixed communities.
- One of our top priorities is to deliver a fair deal for private renters. We believe that everyone has the right to live in a home that is safe, secure, and well-maintained. That's why we will introduce a compulsory licensing scheme for landlords to improve standards and drive out rogue landlords. This will help to ensure that private renters have the protections they need, and that landlords are held accountable for maintaining safe and habitable properties.
- We are also committed to increasing the rate of affordable homebuilding in North Somerset. We will work tirelessly to ensure that identified housing need is delivered to the highest quality and includes the required infrastructure. We will not support schemes that fail to protect existing communities from unnecessary, poorly-serviced, or unpopular development. We believe that everyone deserves to live in a community that is safe, vibrant, and welcoming.
- In addition to building new homes, we will also support a long-term house-building plan and build new council housing for rent. We understand that many people in our community are struggling to find affordable housing, and we are committed to doing everything we can to address this issue.
- We also recognise the urgent need to support rough sleepers, the homeless, and those at risk of homelessness. That's why we will introduce a 'housing first' approach to provide support and assistance to those in need. We will build on best practices from around the world to ensure that everyone in our community has access to the resources and support they need to get back on their feet.
- Finally, we will undertake a review of council planning procedures and resources to restore credibility to the process and ensure that all planning applications are properly and effectively assessed and determined. We will redevelop the Council Design Guide to encourage greener homes and carbon-neutral energy schemes across all council builds. We are committed to building a sustainable future for North Somerset, and we believe that investing in green energy and sustainable housing is a key part of achieving that goal.
- In summary, our local election manifesto is focused on delivering high-quality, affordable housing for everyone in North Somerset. We are committed to building the homes our community needs, while also ensuring that existing communities are protected and supported. We believe that everyone deserves access to safe, secure, and well-maintained housing, and we are committed to working tirelessly to make that vision a reality.





## Placemaking and economic growth

North Somerset Liberal Democrats will work with town and parish councils to create vibrant towns and villages that people want to live and work in.

- The Liberal Democrats will focus on delivering green and inclusive economic growth in North Somerset by focused growth developing on Junction 21 of the M5 (West of England Enterprise Zone) and supporting economic development around the Portishead Line.
- Our plan is to invest in our heritage and visitor economy by delivering world-class tourism facilities at Birnbeck Pier and Tropicana. The Birnbeck Pier, located in Weston-super-Mare, is a Grade II-listed pier that has been closed since 1994. The pier has a rich history and is an integral part of the town's heritage. By restoring it, we aim to preserve a part of our past and promote tourism in the area.
- Similarly, the Tropicana, also located in Weston-super-Mare, is a former lido that has been closed since 2000. We plan to renovate this site and transform it into a modern leisure complex that will attract tourists from far and wide. This will not only provide visitors with a great experience, but it will also create job opportunities for the local community.
- Overall, by investing in these two sites, we hope to promote tourism, create jobs, and preserve important parts of our heritage for future generations to enjoy.
- To promote sustainable development, we will not only increase the amount of greenery along our high streets, but also encourage the creation of Green Towns. These towns will be designed with a focus on environmental sustainability, incorporating features such as green roofs, rain gardens, and permeable pavements. Through these measures, we will create a more liveable and eco-friendly urban environment for all residents with confidence.
- We will allocate funds to improve our transport infrastructure, including the repair and maintenance of our railways and bridges, to ensure the safety and security of our commuters. Additionally, we will actively seek out new opportunities to support local businesses and entrepreneurs, which will stimulate economic growth and job creation. Our ultimate objective is to establish a prosperous, sustainable, and vibrant community where residents can thrive and reach their full potential.





## Our record on North Somerset Council

North Somerset Liberal Democrats have a proud record of action and achievement on the council over the past few years. We have delivered on our promises and got things done for local people. Here are a few examples.

- **Balancing the books and looking after your money** - Lib Dems have made sure council tax remains one of the lowest in the region, £369 a year less than neighbouring Bristol.
- **Delivering the housing we need** - Lib Dems have delivered record numbers of new affordable housing. But they have also opposed Conservative imposed targets for massive green belt development.
- **Working together to get things done** - Lib Dems have worked cross-party with others to get the best for North Somerset (whilst the Conservatives sat on the sidelines moaning).
- **Supporting you through the pandemic** - Lib Dems helped to set up community networks to help vulnerable residents and delivered more than £70million in grants to keep local businesses afloat.
- **Investing in our towns, creating jobs** - Lib Dems have won extra cash to support our town and villages and delivered funding across the district to help create jobs.
- **Taking action on the cost-of-living** - Lib Dems have helped deliver more than £4million in help for vulnerable families and children with energy costs and bills.





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