



St Albans City & District Council Elections 2019

Manifesto

Think Local Vote Conservative

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Introduction

Local Conservatives think every resident should have a decent home, at an affordable price and the chance to work locally. Council services that are delivered efficiently and at low cost. A greener, cleaner more sustainable environment. Better public buildings, with new sports centres, Museums & cultural centres and new social housing. Support for local businesses to help them grow and our High Streets to thrive. A helping hand to the vulnerable, the homeless, those going through bad times, and families in trouble.

Local people need to have a strong say in what happens locally. Your local Conservatives will support your views on the big decisions taken outside the District that impact you: hospitals; school places; local NHS services; train timetables; incinerators built on our border and aircraft noise.

We are delivering on all of this and more. *Think Local - Vote Conservative.*

Our record of delivery is our measure of success:

- Every resident should have a decent home, at an affordable price – Local Plan completed and submitted for inspection. 14,500 homes to 2036 plus 14 primary schools and 4 secondary schools. Extensive programme of improvements to council housing with new energy efficient boilers, windows, doors, kitchens and bathrooms. Extensive programme of sheltered housing redevelopment.
- Every resident should have the chance to work locally – New office space being progressed as part of old police station development. Enterprise Zone created with partners to deliver 8,000 to 12,000 jobs. Article 4 Directions put in place to protect key office space.
- Council services should delivered efficiently and at low cost – 3% Council Tax increase in 8 years, average 0.4% per year.
- The Council should actively encourage a greener, cleaner more sustainable environment – New waste and recycling scheme boosted recycling by 12%. Eliminated Council use of single use plastics. New energy efficient boilers in council housing (72% complete). On track to meet District's carbon emissions reduction long term target.
- The Council should deliver better public buildings, with new sports centres, museums and cultural centres. Three new sports and leisure centres delivered plus new museum and gallery in the old town hall.
- The Council should be building social housing - 109 affordable homes built. The first for a generation!
- The Council should actively support local businesses to help them grow and our High Streets to thrive – Economic Development Strategy completed with 3 key priorities on skills, jobs and planning.
- The Council and community will provide a helping hand to the vulnerable, the homeless, those going through bad times, and families in trouble – 50 Syrian refugees welcomed to the District (more than any other Herts council). Increased support for rough sleepers. Mental health and youth gang diversionary priorities being progressed by the Strategic Partnership.

Local people need to have a strong say in what happens locally. Your local Conservatives will support your views on the big decisions taken outside the District that impact you: hospitals; school places; local NHS services; train timetables; incinerators built on our border and aircraft noise.

In our manifesto we set out how we plan for the Council to serve our residents, businesses, voluntary groups and other customers over the coming 5 year period. It includes 10 priority projects for 2019/20, with specific deliverables defined.

Alec Campbell

Councillor Alec Campbell, Leader of the Council

The Context of Our Work

District Facts 2018

District

Population **147,100**

Size in square miles **62.2**

Number of houses (and other dwellings) **60,198**

Band D Council Tax **16,044** properties (average rate **£1,703.96**)

Number of businesses **10,355**

Employment rate **78%** (national average 75%)

2 MPs (Anne Main St Albans, Bim Afolami Hitchin and Harpenden)

Average household income **£37,688** (national average £27,869)

56.6% of residents with HND, degree (NVQ 4) or above (national average 38.6%)

Community, leisure and sport

24 community centres

6 libraries

53 primary schools, **12** secondary schools, **1** FE college

443.5 hectares of managed parks and open spaces

24 leisure centres and sports facilities

3 cemeteries

2 museums and **3** heritage sites

1 Charter Market

1,837,000 visitors to St Albans per year

Public health

Life expectancy at birth Male **82** Female **84.8**

1 Clinical Commissioning Group covering **13** GP practices
1 hospital

Planning and housing

Average house price **£632,200** (national £296,500)

82% Greenbelt

c.5,300 planning and building control applications received each year

913 additional dwellings per year estimated required

Around **360** houses built per year

5,000 Council owned and managed dwellings

Democracy and customer services

20 wards and **58** elected members

8 parish councils plus **1** town council (Harpenden)

270 member meetings per year

Over **130,000** calls, **4,000** emails, **2,380** appointments and **31,920** visits received by the Customer Service Centre every year

The Council

Income

Council Tax **£10.65m**

Revenue Support Grant **£0m**

Expenditure

General Fund **£14.7m**

HRA **£28.2m**

Council staff **344** (Full Time Equivalent)

Parking and environment

1,525,650 visitors to District car parks per year (**5,700** spaces in car parks)

4,504 on-street parking spaces

1 CCTV monitoring and control centre

52,000 tonnes of refuse, recycling, food waste and green waste collected a year

Services provided:

- **refuse and recycling services;**
- **parks, play areas,**
- **leisure centres and sports activities;**
- **street cleaning; markets;**
- **tackling crime and nuisances like fly-tipping, noise and dog mess;**
- **special events and festivals;**
- **museums; elections;**
- **planning and building control;**
- **car parking and parking control;**
- **housing; benefit advice;**
- **sustainability initiatives;**
- **food, health and safety inspectors.**

Thriving Community

Over the next five years we will:

- Provide additional high quality social and affordable housing through new build, open market purchase and the requirement for affordable provision as part of significant new housing developments
- Create a business case and capability to build significant numbers of Council houses and then commence delivery
- Invest in our sheltered accommodation for elderly, disabled, those with learning difficulties and disadvantaged residents
- Work closely with volunteer groups who care for the elderly, disabled and disadvantaged to help reduce loneliness and isolation
- Deliver the Community Safety Strategy and work proactively with the Police to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour
- Work with local agencies and support groups to support troubled families, and provide strong safe-guarding of vulnerable residents including victims of domestic violence and radicalisation
- Maintain and strengthen the Council's emergency preparedness, actively reduce risks and support residents in the event of a major incident
- Deliver the Inclusion Strategy Delivery Plan to support an inclusive community where everyone has the opportunity and support to take part in and contribute to community life
- Work with local groups to improve recreation, sport and social activities for all people regardless of ability
- Deliver the Health and Wellbeing Strategy objectives to improve physical and mental health and well-being
- Encourage and provide access to volunteering for all from school age through to and beyond retirement
- Support Hertfordshire County Council's efforts to increase provision of primary (particularly in St Albans) and secondary school places
- Support the delivery of a new secondary school in Harpenden
- Promote environmental sustainability and recycling initiatives through education and promotional activities
- Work with Hertfordshire County Council on a strategy to improve the outcomes and life chances for young people aged 16-25
- Monitor and improve fire safety measures in all Council owned residential properties
- Develop and implement a new plan to address homelessness and build upon the excellent work being done by the Council and DWP in implementing Universal Credit

Our priority projects for 2019-20

Progress the sheltered housing redevelopment programme:

- Wavell House – 24 housing units for the over 55s due for completion 2019

Progress affordable housing on Council owned land:

- St Albans City Centre site – 35 affordable units (pending planning approval)
- Linley Court – 28 affordable rent housing units due for completion in October 2019
- Mereden Court – redevelopment into 18 new social rent homes for completion in 2020

Continue the substantial programme of improvement for Council houses and flats that significantly reduces energy usage and CO₂ emissions, providing better homes and lower energy bills:

- Grade A boilers in 338 properties
- Windows and doors in 50 properties
- Bathrooms and Kitchens in 100 properties

Over the next five years we will:

- Put a Local Plan in place to meet the need for housing, jobs, schools and associated infrastructure
- Protect the Green Belt, the District's environment and green spaces
- Work with neighbouring authorities in south west Hertfordshire to deliver a strategic plan for housing, jobs and supporting infrastructure
- Develop a strategy to increase delivery of Council owned residential properties
- Lead initiatives to reduce the impact of aircraft noise and defend the interests of the District from proposals to expand Luton Airport passenger capacity
- Encourage home self-build to promote high quality and diverse housing schemes
- Carry out planning enforcement, where appropriate
- Develop cultural, sport, leisure and heritage facilities with activities that benefit the entire District including promoting the new City centre museum and art gallery
- Support the development of local District, Town and St Albans City football clubs
- Improve children's play areas and open spaces (where not the responsibility of Parishes or the City Neighbourhoods Committee)
- Ensure an effective fly-tip, street cleaning and graffiti removal service, and prosecute offenders
- Create a comprehensive litter strategy
- Quickly replace missing and damaged street signs and invest in their proactive maintenance
- Improve the Council's floral and plant displays and encourage others to join in
- Develop a plan to address environmental issues affecting Verulamium Park Lake and River Ver
- Maintain progress in achieving the Council's 20% reduction target in greenhouse gas emissions between 2008/9 and 2020/21
- Work with retailers and other stakeholders to increase and improve street parking and traffic flow including free short term parking
- Work with residents to provide solutions to difficulties in parking hot spots
- Conduct rolling reviews of Controlled Parking Zones
- Work in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council to identify schemes to ease traffic congestion and improve air quality, especially for the centre of St Albans
- Work in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council on timely infrastructure improvements, to improve road and pavement maintenance and to reduce the damage to verges and pavements

Over the next five years we will:

- Support Hertfordshire County Council's speed limit reviews – for 20mph limits in urban areas and Tranquil and Quiet lanes in rural areas
- Develop a plan for cycling and walking routes in the District to improve sustainable healthy travel for work and leisure
- Provide increased cycle parking in shopping and commercial areas
- Act as a champion for commuters to improve local rail services and ensure station improvements meet the increase in passenger numbers
- Work with partners on initiatives to improve public transport and encourage community transport provision
- Redevelop the Harpenden Public Halls site
- Develop a feasibility study to explore operational improvements at the Alban Arena
- Assume responsibility from Hertfordshire County Council, for, and improve, verge grass cutting on all roads (except high speed routes)
- Encourage migration to electric vehicles, provision of electric taxis, and reduced engine idling, to help minimise pollution from vehicles.

Our priority projects for 2019-20

Progress the Local Plan for adoption following planned submission for inspection in March 2019

Progress the development of the St Albans Civic Centre Opportunity Site (CCOS) South to provide (subject to planning approval):

- 35 affordable apartments
- 63 apartments for sale
- 50,000 sq feet of office space
- 118 car parking spaces

Progress development of Harpenden leisure and cultural facilities due to open in 2020 and 2021 respectively

Vibrant Economy

Over the next five years we will:

- Implement the new Economic Development strategy to: encourage new start-ups and business investment; create more skilled jobs in the District; and, ensure that local education and FE provision can deliver the required skills
- Encourage green science industries in collaboration with the Building Research Establishment, Rothamsted Research and University of Hertfordshire (through the 'Green Triangle')
- Improve marketing of St Albans District as a first-class professional services location
- Work with St Albans Business Improvement District to enhance and promote the St Albans visitor and retail offer
- Encourage responsible street entertainment and cultural activities
- Encourage a broad and unique shopping experience with high quality shops, restaurants and entertainment venues
- Provide opportunities and encouragement for local businesses to invest in and sponsor community facilities and activities as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility programmes
- Encourage telecoms providers to upgrade the quality of wireless and broadband networks for the benefit of business and residents
- Extend the provision of free Wi-Fi at key Council buildings, museums and sports centres where supported by positive business cases

Our priority projects for 2019-20

Support delivery of the Enviro Tech Enterprise Zone in partnership with Dacorum Borough Council, Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership and the relevant landowners, delivering 8,000 to 12,000 new jobs by 2042

Cost Effective Council

Over the next five years we will:

- Provide high quality, value for money services
- Strengthen the performance management culture across the Council ensuring the customer is at the heart of everything we do
- Continue to develop Council officers and councillors
- Work in partnership with other arms of local government and other public, private and voluntary sector parties to ensure the delivery of services at the best value for residents
- Actively support local groups to carry out functions at present carried out by the Council while providing minimal, but effective, mutually agreed supervision
- Implement and maintain the cyber-security plan to protect systems and data
- Measure, monitor and improve online service availability
- Build on our 60% recycling rate to improve sustainability through active plans to reduce, reuse and recycle waste
- Work with businesses, especially pubs and restaurants, to encourage recycling. This will be beneficial to both the Council's targets and the businesses' waste clearance costs, ultimately reducing the business waste that goes to landfill
- Extend the availability of services online to provide 24x7 access and reduce the need to telephone or email the Council
- Treat parking as a service for residents, visitors and businesses rather than a means of generating income
- Ensure repair and maintenance of Council assets is properly funded
- Review and reduce the number of Council meetings to ensure efficient focussed management and delivery of services

Our priority projects for 2019-20

Implement digital technologies to transform services for customers:

- Overhaul the Council's website to ensure it better meets the needs of the community including being smartphone friendly
- Extend and promote the services available through the MyStAlbans account to improve access to services 24 hours a day

Undertake service reviews of at least 3 key areas to understand, set and meet customer expectations, increase productivity and embed our new organisational behaviours.

Bring car park management and parking enforcement in house, and retain income

