Brighton and Hove is a city with a lot going for it. We have a great location, an entrepreneurial culture, the best independent shops in the country, two universities, and a vibrant arts and sports scene.

But it’s also a city of contrast. We face challenges such as a low-wage economy, a housing crisis and areas of severe deprivation. This situation has been worsened by the Tory Government’s continued austerity, resulting in damage to many public services like our schools, police and NHS. Meanwhile all three parties on the Council seem more focused on having internal arguments than on serving the city.

In Brighton & Hove, Lib Dem membership has trebled since 2015. We are the only national party that has wholeheartedly and consistently opposed Brexit, chiming with the open, internationalist views of this city where 68.6% people voted to Remain in the EU.

The values of the Liberal Democrats are set out in the preamble to our constitution:

“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.”

The council elections in May 2019 give the residents of Brighton & Hove an opportunity to vote for change. It is time to elect Lib Dem councillors to ensure there is a liberal voice for a liberal city.

Our manifesto is an evolving document in a fast-changing world. If you want to get involved in local Lib Dem policy formation, please contact us via our website, liberalbrighton.org.
We have a housing crisis in our city. In January 2019, the average price of renting a one-bed flat hit £1,000 per month, and the average 3-bed home costs 16 times the average household annual income.

Despite repeated promises from the council to set up a 365-day homelessness shelter, *rough sleepers are still forced to live and die on our streets.*

Many changes to housing and homelessness policies are needed at national government level. However, within the powers the council does have, it should be taking more action, and where powers fall short there should be persistent, active lobbying of the Westminster government by Brighton and Hove City Council. Solving this crisis takes a change of thinking and direct action.

**TACKLING HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS**

We would:

- Provide a permanent night shelter for homeless people. Until this is in place, the police should not move on homeless people overnight and confiscate their tents, as they can now do under the council's PSPO scheme.
- Provide homeless people with spare addresses, using the same model as Lewisham council if their trial proves successful.
- Lobby the government for the power to charge 200% council tax on empty homes and second homes, then implement this across Brighton & Hove, raising over £1 million a year.
- Enforce at least 40% affordable housing or 30% social housing in every new development, with the affordable/social homes equally distributed between the blocks in multi-block developments. If there are no housing associations interested in running the social homes, we would bring these services back in-house and have the council run them directly.
- Build 1,500 new homes on part of the council-owned land currently occupied by Hollingbury Golf Course, subject to thorough public consultation. As a first step, you can give us your views on the proposal using our online survey at [http://liberalbrighton.org/hollingbury](http://liberalbrighton.org/hollingbury)
- Investigate a Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme and run one if practicable.
- Ring-fence a proportion of the community benefit contributions from every private development to be put towards social housing, temporary accommodation or the permanent homeless shelter.
GETTING THE BASICS RIGHT

The council has been neglecting the basics in running the city – our roads and pavements are bumpy with potholes and cracks, our recycling service is limited in range and the majority of our household waste ends up incinerated instead of recycled.

Meanwhile important infrastructure developments are put to tender using opaque and obscure processes and agreed on behind closed doors. We demand better from our council and believe our city councillors must be held accountable.

We would:

- Fight the secret decision-making that Labour, the Greens and the Conservatives demonstrated on the troubled King Alfred project. All local residents should have the right to be consulted about planning matters and other major matters that concern them.

- Invest in the city, copying the local investment model used by Eastbourne Liberal Democrats to raise money for infrastructure projects and keep their council financially solvent.

- Lobby the government for extra money from the Pothole Action Fund to repair our roads and resurface unsafe pavements.

- Attempt to renegotiate our current recycling contracts to accept a wider range of plastics and run a city-wide composting scheme so we can enjoy the same quality of recycling services as the rest of the country.

- Use any extra maintenance funds to renovate our poorly-maintained public toilets.
FIGHTING BREXIT

The Liberal Democrats have campaigned since June 2016 to give people a chance to vote on the final deal, with an option to remain in the European Union. Locally we have worked closely with pro-EU members of other political parties and local groups such as Brighton & Hove for EU, demonstrating monthly in New Road and taking part in numerous marches, rallies and diverse events.

Our 2016 booklet, "Europe is working for Brighton & Hove", describes the many benefits – economic, cultural and social – that EU membership and EU citizens bring to our city. Subsequent studies have indicated over 3,725 jobs in Brighton & Hove could be lost in a no-deal Brexit. Both our party and our city have a proud history of openness and internationalism that we will continue to promote.

We'd like to see the council act as a gateway between the city and the rest of Europe.

- Since 2016 there has been an alarming rise in hate crime directed at ethnic minorities and continental Europeans. We encourage those witnessing racist abuse to intervene to support the victim and to report such incidents to the police. We would promote such policies in local government.

- We support the free movement of people. In the event of this ending under a hard Brexit the Liberal Democrats would fight for the rights of EU citizens by pushing the government to simplify its permanent residence scheme for EU citizens. We will also fight for UK citizens by using our contacts within the ALDE Eurogroup to secure the same rights for UK citizens in the EU.

- The Liberal Democrats will campaign to maintain EU environmental standards, such as clean beach legislation, as well as European funding for our universities’ and medical school’s research.

- We believe young people should enjoy the same rights as their parents. We will therefore push for the UK to remain part of schemes such as ERASMUS and maintain EU-derived social rights such as annual leave.

- Above all, we hope we can avoid the mess of Brexit altogether. We firmly support the People’s Vote campaign and have advocated this policy since the referendum.
Nationally, the Liberal Democrats want to provide an extra £7bn for our overstretched education sector, to prevent the Conservatives opening new grammar schools and to triple the Pupil Premium, so that financially disadvantaged students are provided with additional support to decrease the attainment gap between rich and poor students.

Given the large funding shortfalls in our local area, the extra money proposed nationally can be used to:

- Meet the needs of local schools as highlighted in the Save Our Schools campaign so that they have enough teachers, teaching assistants, books and equipment.
- Provide additional funding for Special Educational Needs, which has been suffering from the effects of excessive cuts.
- Encourage primary schools to provide foreign language teaching, when students are most able to learn these skills.

In addition we would:

- Oppose the selling off of school grounds.
- Encourage the sharing of sports facilities between schools and the local community.

Picture of Elm Grove Primary School by Wikimedia user Hassocks5489 who has released it into the public domain.
HAVING PRIDE IN OUR CITY

Our city may have problems but it’s still a great city, home to every race, gender and creed. Our citizens are politically engaged with community groups for everything from beach cleaning to housing reform. We are surrounded by beautiful countryside and sea, we enjoy the urban lifestyle of a large city with the convenience of a small one and enjoy cultural, culinary and entertainment scenes that are the envy of the country.

One of the great things about our city is its nightlife: from world-class restaurants to seaside nightclubs, we are a destination.

However we are concerned with the national trend of pub closures and the local trend of music venue closures, with the city recently losing Sticky Mike’s Frog Bar only a few years after losing the Blind Tiger Club. As such we will oppose the closure of live music venues in the city and seek to support free houses and community-run pubs however possible.

Part of what makes Brighton and Hove vibrant is the LGBT scene, and with subsidies for LGBT organisations being cut and rumours of Pride being charged for use of Preston Park, we would like to reiterate that we support Brighton Pride as a key event in the city’s calendar and our proud our city hosts the UK’s largest Trans Pride event as it heads into its seventh year.

As the party that introduced gay marriage and repealed section 28, we believe there is still work to be done on LGBT rights, such as banning conversion therapies, providing universal PrEP access and providing more support for trans people as they transition.

Our city is also made better by our fantastic libraries, museums and tourism venues.

As such, we support the Save Hove Library campaign, aimed at keeping the Carnegie Library in Hove in use as a library, as well as opposing the closure of any other library sites.

We would extend the opening hours of council-run libraries and tourist venues so they are consistently open on Bank Holidays.
In our city we face many challenges and some important topics don’t fit neatly into our five main themes. So, we would like to briefly highlight other ways in which we believe Liberal Democrat policies can help our city.

Health and social care

Nationally and locally, health services are struggling with government cuts, with each winter bringing a new crisis. Currently, Brighton & Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust is performing worst in the country in mental health treatment.

- We believe the NHS needs both a large increase in funding, starting with a penny in the pound on income tax dedicated to funding the NHS, and reforms to treat mental health as seriously as physical health and to integrate healthcare and social care.
- In the short-term, we would help our health services locally by:
  - Promoting community pharmacies as a front line of support for minor ailments, reducing stress on GPs and A&E.
  - Putting up mental health signage near busy roads and train stations so that health services are likely to get involved at an earlier stage.

Transport and infrastructure

While our bus network is superior to those of most other UK cities, there is always room for improvement, and air pollution is an ongoing problem locally. We propose:

- Developing a new Park and Ride at Mill Road. The site is used temporarily for this purpose on Brighton & Hove Albion match days and if made into a permanent site could reduce traffic in the city centre, as with the successful Park and Rides used in Oxford.
- Expansion of the cycle lane network where viable. Cycling is environmentally friendly and good for public health, but dependent on making infrastructure cyclist-friendly.
- Whenever possible, providing infrastructure for electric vehicles in the city and encouraging Brighton and Hove Buses to adopt electric buses.

Let’s get to work!

We think ourselves lucky to live in the best city in the country, and we’re excited about the opportunity to make things even better. For a real solution to the housing crisis, getting the basics right, fighting Brexit, saving our schools and having pride in our city, vote Liberal Democrat on 2nd May. With your help, we can get to work.