



# Six to Fix

The Liberal Democrat Manifesto for  
Herefordshire Council elections 2011

<http://www.herefordlibdems.org.uk>

# Six to Fix

Herefordshire's Conservative-run County Council has let us down. It has been wasting our money at a time when most of us are having to tighten our belts. It is not listening to what local people want for the county.

"Six to Fix" is our way of addressing the six problems which people in Herefordshire raise most on the doorstep with our activists and councillors.

## Stop the Council wasting your money

At a time when people are having to tighten their belts, Herefordshire Council must stop wasting taxpayers' money.

**FIX 1**

## Housing for local need not developer profit

We need to address the housing shortage in Herefordshire but this must be done in line with the needs of local communities and not to please the developers.

**FIX 2**

## Stop closing our community's schools

Local schools are cornerstones of our communities. This is not just an issue of education, it is about protecting our rural way of life. We will stop the current programme of school closures and look at how to make all schools financially viable.

**FIX 3**

## Fix our roads and transport infrastructure

We will fight for a bypass for Herefordshire. We will invest in resurfacing our roads and filling in potholes as well as looking at how to maintain our rural bus service and expand our train service.

**FIX 4**

## Strengthen the county's economy

The Council must do all it can to support local businesses and to help nurture prosperity within the county. Part of this is agreeing an acceptable growth plan for Hereford City.

**FIX 5**

## Bring policing back to the local community

Local people need to have more face to face contact with their police officers. This will help to ensure people feel safe in their communities. Police need to be freed of their paperwork to spend more time on the beat.

**FIX 6**

# Six to Fix

## 1. Stop the Council wasting your money

Herefordshire Council spends hundreds of millions of pounds a year. But all the public sees is declining services, a mountain of local debt, and London banker style salaries for its top managers.

The Council has been spending a great deal of money on itself (it plans to spend hundreds of thousands of pounds on its new car park but none for the public in the city centre).

It has handed over road repairs to a London based company and our roads have gone from bad to worse.

Meanwhile Herefordshire Council spends more than two million pounds a year on publicity, including the propaganda sheet "Herefordshire Matters" - how much more than two million they don't know.

**At a time when we all have to pull in our belts, it is vital that the council returns to competent hands.**

Liberal Democrats will:

- Put as many of the Council's contracts with local businesses as possible
- Stop the Council producing propaganda publications paid for by the taxpayer like "Herefordshire Matters"
- Cut the number of senior management posts and limit senior staff salaries

## 2. Housing for local need not developer profit

Housing in Herefordshire must be built with the needs of the local community in mind. Preference for this housing must be given to people with local links and schemes such as "home buy" should be expanded locally. We need housing where there is local demand, not large scale housing developments in just a few areas.

Many young people have to live with their parents or move to another part of the country as they are unable to afford to buy a home in the communities in which they have grown up. There are currently in excess of 5000 people on the housing waiting list in Herefordshire.

The County council's planning system is secretive and too remote, with most decisions being taken by unaccountable officials behind closed doors or by councillors who don't know the local area.

Liberal Democrats will:

- Support development that is appropriate to the needs of each community
- Give greater priority in the provision of housing to people who have local links
- Make sure that planning decisions are made in public and in the communities they affect. We will reintroduce local planning committees where local people can attend and take part in the decisions that affect them

# Six to Fix

## 3. Stop closing our community's schools

Three years ago the Conservative administration on Herefordshire Council tried to close or merge 37 local schools, only backing down when thousands of people marched in protest in Hereford.

Liberal Democrats led the opposition within the Council and made sure that the people's voice was heard. Now the council has already started picking off schools for closure one by one.

**They have to be stopped. This is not just about education: this is about communities losing their identity.**

Why should children in Herefordshire be forced to travel miles to go to school?

Liberal Democrats will:

- Help ensure that all schools, working together, find ways to become financially viable
- Stop the current administration's plan to decimate the County's schools and support our communities, not undermine them

## 4. Fix our roads and transport infrastructure

Herefordshire residents are spending many thousands of pounds a year on expensive fuel, as well as damaging the environment whilst queuing to get into and through Hereford city. Enough is enough: it's time that the views of the overwhelming majority of Herefordshire people were heeded. **We need a by-pass. Why should a minority hold to ransom the future prosperity of the city and county?**

The speed at which the Council or its contractors fill potholes has become a disgrace. Some on the main roads remain for months, growing ever larger and costing more to repair. Some are so poorly filled they soon become dangerous again.

Twelve years ago the Liberal Democrat led administration dramatically increased and improved the bus services within the County. Some market towns went from having one or two buses a day to and from Hereford to an hourly service. We must maintain this level of service after the local elections, not just before.

The trains in Herefordshire are overcrowded and stations have problems with disabled access.

Liberal Democrats will:

- Work to improve the road links and road condition
- Support a poll of Herefordshire residents to prove once and for all how most Herefordians feel about the principle of a by-pass
- Work with First Great Western and Arriva Trains Wales to improve the quality of train journeys to and from Herefordshire. We will press for more carriages to stop overcrowding and improve the frequency of services
- Campaign to reopen a station in Pontrilas

# Six to Fix

## 5. Strengthen the county's economy

Herefordshire needs to support its local businesses so as to protect its jobs and build prosperity.

Herefordshire Council has been a brake on economic progress by failing to agree an acceptable development plan for Hereford City.

They have also failed in their support for tourism, an industry with large growth potential.

Liberal Democrats will:

- Work to gain the necessary transport infrastructure to keep the county competitive
- Support the county's tourism industry and give tourism a greater priority
- Work with bus companies to make it easier for students to get to training courses

## 6. Bring policing back to the local community

We must increase the police presence in our communities: national statistics show that police officers can spend as little as 11% of their time on actual policing. There is a perception within our communities that the frontline presence has declined over the years. This must be reversed.

Liberal Democrats will:

- Fight to ensure there is no cut in frontline policing
- Insist that West Mercia Police talk to the local communities about policing priorities and act on their advice
- Demand that uniformed officers are used to fight and prevent crime rather than being immersed in paperwork
- Ensure that the council takes a tough approach to those pubs and clubs whose drinkers cause a public nuisance

