

Exeter Green Party Manifesto

City Council Elections 2014



The Green Party is bringing creative thinking and positive solutions to Councils across Britain. We believe Exeter should be no different. Indeed, many ideas we first proposed a number of years ago are now being implemented. This demonstrates that the Green Party is the truly progressive voice in both local and national politics.

The election of Green Councillors will hold the Labour dominated City Council to account, creating a strong opposition that will seek to:

- Promote a local economy which puts people and the environment first
- Prioritise people's health and wellbeing
- Achieve sensible development of the city within physical, social and environmental limits
- Make local politics more democratic and accountable

Exeter Green Party Councillors will demonstrate this in a number of policy areas:

Putting people first

- Robustly **resist all Coalition spending cuts** to essential local services, seek to **protect public sector jobs** and minimise the use of agency staff paid for with public money
- Push the Council to award contracts to businesses that pay the Living Wage, reject zero hours contracts and where bosses are paid no more than ten times the lowest paid employees
- Promote the introduction of a **Living Wage Mark** to all local employers who pay at least the Living Wage to all employees.

Generating income to mitigate Coalition government spending cuts

- Work to improve **energy efficiency** in City Council buildings and **extend renewable energy generation** from local authority assets to cut energy costs and generate income
- **Review parking charges** in City Council controlled car parks so they maximise essential income for reinvestment in Council services
- Ensure the 'New Homes Bonus', worth up to £3 million a year, is transparently used to **prioritise funding for vital community facilities and**

services necessary as the result of the planned growth of Exeter.

Building local economic resilience

- Push for the introduction of **preferential business rates** for small local businesses and social enterprises
- Campaign for better local advice and support services for local businesses and social enterprises and **ensure local traders voices are heard in shaping economic strategy**
- Support the introduction of a **local currency** for Exeter, following successful models such as the Totnes Pound and Bristol Pound, to boost the local economy, help local businesses thrive and keep money circulating in the community
- Resist more 'clone town Exeter': **oppose further expansion of supermarkets and chainstores** in the city and out of town retail developments
- Push for a **new market square** as part of the redevelopment of the bus station and Sidwell Street area; showcasing the 'Best of Devon', with an area of flexible units to house an **expanded farmers market**, craft and artisan use, local businesses, social enterprises and charities and for **showcasing Exeter's multiculturalism and diversity**.

Prioritising people's health and wellbeing

- Press for the introduction of a single **pollution reduction policy and strategy** in order to address all sources of pollution which impact on people's health and damage the environment, with a particular emphasis on **air quality**
- Push for **Exeter to become a 20mph city**, making it safer and more conducive for all ages to walk and cycle, and the introduction of self enforcing 20mph zones to all, and any, residential street where residents support this
- Create a **Walking City** which prioritises pedestrians and creates an urban environment which is easy and safe to walk through and improves access for people with disabilities
- Press for a more **coherent cycle network** with priority being given to completing 'missing links'
- Support measures and facilities which promote health and wellbeing in the city such as a new swimming pool as part of the bus station site redevelopment
- Push for **the protection and expansion of cultural and tourist activities** in the city
- Press for increased funding for **activities to engage and encourage children and young people.**

Development today as if tomorrow mattered

- **Challenge the economic and housing growth assumptions** and projections for Exeter as outlined in the Core Strategy
- Seek proper engagement with East Devon and Teignbridge District Councils to **ensure any extensions of Exeter outside the city boundary are carefully thought through and properly funded** to prevent 'urban sprawl' which will become a drain on the City
- Campaign hard for **the legal protection of Exeter's remaining green spaces** due to their positive impact on health and wellbeing;
- Push for **full and transparent consultation over proposed greenfield developments** and take seriously the results of these consultations
- Explore **imaginative 'brownfield' development initiatives** such as turning single storey car parks into affordable low-car housing developments

- Press for an **expansion of food growing land** within the city and for **allotment sites to be afforded permanent protection**
- Resist granting planning permission where plans are likely to have a detrimental impact on the quality of life for Exeter residents
- Press for **further Council Housing developments** which prioritise key workers and are built to 'passive house' and zero carbon standards
- Push for new planning guidance that enables **community developed, owned and managed housing co-operatives**, community land trusts and co-housing projects which **guarantee genuinely affordable housing in perpetuity**
- Press for **all new housing developments to be 'zero carbon'** with immediate effect, rather than waiting until 2016 legislation, to ensure very low energy costs for tenants
- Press for an ambitious programme of home insulation and installation of renewable energy technologies to **address fuel poverty**, based on the successful Green Party Kirklees scheme
- Support **community led schemes to promote the development and generation of renewable energy**
- Press for 100% of electricity used in Exeter City Council offices to come from renewable sources by 2015.

Keeping the city moving, sustainably

- Make the case for sustainable transport measures that **tackle Exeter's seriously poor air quality, relieve congestion** and help **reduce the city's carbon emissions**
- Seek the introduction of a workplace parking levy on the city's largest businesses and employers, beginning with parking provision at the Civic Centre as a demonstration model; **ensure income from parking levies is ringfenced to support sustainable transport initiatives**
- Push the Council to use the planning process to **ensure new housing developments are low-car developments**
- Support the **expansion of car clubs** into residential areas, reducing the need for car ownership and offering access to a car for those who are unable, or choose not to, own a car.
- Fully support the introduction of two new railway stations at Newcourt and Marsh Barton and use the

openings to argue for a **more ambitious Devon Metro** with new rolling stock, increased frequencies and improved connections to Exeter, e.g. from Cranbrook and Okehampton

- Support the introduction of **'Link and Ride' schemes as an alternative to any further Park and Ride** in the city, providing frequent high quality buses along strategic routes into Exeter with smaller car parks along the route, thereby encouraging a greater proportion of journeys to be made by public transport
- Press for a **new 'state of the art' Bus Station** situated close to the city centre to enable integration with local and national public transport links.

Reducing waste

- Press for the **immediate introduction of weekly food waste collections** from houses and businesses to increase recycling rates and generate energy and income
- Press for **waste reduction** to be prioritised over recycling when considering communication strategies and messaging on waste

- Continue to highlight the flawed decision by Exeter City Council and Exeter Labour to support incineration in Exeter; **make the case for alternatives to incineration** in future and **monitor the impact on health and the environment of the new incinerator.**

Making local politics more democratic and accountable

- Press for **decision making to be decentralised** and for local people to be far more involved in decisions that directly affect them, in particular when considering the impacts of new housing and other developments as well as the way in which budgets are allocated
- Press for additional planning guidance which **increase the responsibilities of developers** toward the community and the environment
- Look to **publish all Freedom of Information requests** and responses on the Council's website.

**Vote Green Party on Thursday 22nd May
For the Common Good**

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Exeter Green Party Manifesto for City Council elections, Thursday May 22nd 2014