CALDERDALE
Local Elections 2021

Liberal Democrats



MANIFESTO

OUR VISION FOR CALDERDALE

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.

OUR VALUES – LIBERALISM & SOCIAL DEMOCRACY

- Open to new ideas.
- Tolerant of others views and beliefs.
- Value everyone as an individual.
- Belief in empowering people and communities.
- Fighting poverty, ignorance and conformity.
- Protecting the environment.
- Internationalist outlook.
- Supporting community politics & re-engaging people at a local level.
- Committed to democratic reform.
- Champion the freedom, dignity and well-being of individuals.

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FOREWARD

Cllr James Baker - Leader of Calderdale Liberal Democrats.

Calderdale's history is entwined in the political tradition of Liberalism. Sir Francis Crossley a British carpet manufacturer, philanthropist and Liberal Party Politician built Almshouses, gifted People's Park in Halifax to the people of Calderdale and created an Orphan home on Skircoat Moor that became Crossley Heath Grammar School.

The contribution to the Borough from the Liberal tradition has continued in modern times. Todmorden Town Councillor Michael Taylor as a former Calderdale Council Leader introduced the first Equal Opportunities and Recruitment Policy. Former

Councillor Janet Battye led the Council into the top 10 in the country for recycling, the late Lord David Shutt worked to help establish the community foundation for Calderdale. Today the group of Councillors I lead puts forward radical and progressive ideas to transform our borough.

People in Calderdale have great resilience, this has been demonstrated throughout the Coronavirus pandemic, and our response to challenges such as flooding. We also have great industry, skill and foresight as expressed in the motto of our Borough 'Industrial Arte Prudentia'.

This manifesto for a future Calderdale captures the industry, skill and foresight of Calderdale residents. It is born from the minds of residents who demand better for our Borough. Ours is a party in which ideas can flourish.

Any Calderdale resident can join us and see their own ideas championed and put into action.

The Liberal Democrat vision for Calderdale is contained within this local election manifesto. It is a vision where our local authority is transformed into an institution that empowers communities to having a real say. A vision for a more modern, efficient, and commercially minded Council that delivers high quality public services. A vision where poverty is fought with a passion, and transformation into a sustainable and fair future can occur.





IMPROVING OUR LOCAL ECONOMY

Local investment

Liberal Democrats will work to ensure the Council invests in local businesses and industry. Currently, the Council holds millions of pounds in investments with banks. We think more of these public funds should be put into local enterprises.

Boosting Tourism

Calderdale has a fantastic cultural heritage and a stunning natural environment to offer for tourism. We believe it is short sighted of the current administration to close tourist information centres.

We would work in partnership with the private sector to develop new tourists' attractions in the Borough. This would bring more wealth and visitors into our area and local economy. From Shibden Hall to the Industrial Museum we could make more of our assets.

A 21st Century Manufacturing Centre

Calderdale has a rich industrial history. We ought to be driving the next industrial revolution that will involve high-tech manufacturing, automation of production and sustainable energy production and storage. A Liberal Democrat run Council would strive to support modern industries.



Technical Skills

We would support the creation of more apprenticeships in technical skills. Currently the workforce in West Yorkshire is under-skilled. To attract the best businesses and increase the life chances of people we need to create more opportunities to learn technical skills to complete in a modern workplace.

Growing exports, and international relations

We would work to support local businesses to access new markets and export more. We would also promote our existing cultural links and put more of a focus on town twinning. We exist in a global market and need to think globally.

Start-up zones and markets

The best way out of poverty is to give people the tools to build, trade, develop and start up their own enterprises. However, the start-up costs can be so high that often only those with existing capital can undertake new enterprises. We would seek to set up enterprise spaces for new start-ups. We would also invest in our local markets and develop them into leisure destinations with live music and food stalls.

Local business networks and mentoring

We would develop more local business networks and mentoring schemes across Calderdale. We think a community-based scheme for local businesses that are supported by the Council would help to foster a business spirit across Calderdale.

Highway improvements

A lot of money is spent patching our roads. We believe it would be more cost effective for there to be a major capital invest to save initiative for our Highways to bring them up to standard.

Pothole Machine

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Companies such as JCB have produced new pothole machines. We would invest in the latest pothole busting technology to help fix our streets.

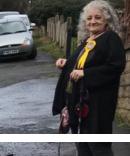
Quality Repairs that last

Too often Highways in Calderdale are fixed by throwing down some cold tarmac. We would ensure proper repairs are carried out with roads being sealed and higher quality use of services. This might cost more in the short-term but would save money in the long run. Buying cheap isn't economical.































Investing in housing

Calderdale Council ranks in the lowest 15 authorities in the country for new homes being built. This has resulted in large waiting lists for social housing. It has also meant we have missed out in Millions of pounds of 'New Homes Bonus' funding.

In parts of the Borough much of the existing social housing stock is in a poor state of repair with too many people living in damp properties. We would take a robust approach to challenging social housing providers over the state of repair of their properties.

We believe in fighting poverty. There is no greater poverty than the poverty caused by not having a home. That is why we would use the new Calderdale Housing Company to build more independent living and affordable housing. We would also develop and support Community Land Trusts to help bring forward more housing projects.

Passivhaus and Sustainable building

The Liberal Democrat administration in York has just secured one of the largest Passivhaus schemes in the country. We would follow the example of other well-run Liberal Democrat administrations and seek to bring forward new sustainable housing schemes in Calderdale.

Supporting a South Pennines Regional Park

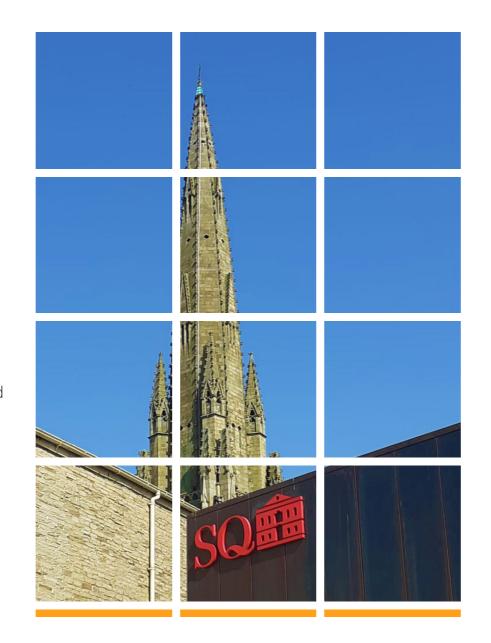
The South Pennines is the only upland area of England without any designated protection Framework. A Liberal Democrat Council would help lead a campaign to get our unique Pennine landscape into a new National Park. This would be a major boost to environmental protection and tourism within our region.

Transforming our Town Centres

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There are dozens of empty units on some of our high streets. Sadly, Calderdale as a local authority has sought to further expand the retails space in Halifax Town Centre. This has caused an oversupply at a time when the model of high streets as retail spaces is in decline. We would support the transition of our town centres into parks, leisure and residential spaces.





Bring empty homes back into use

There are too many empty homes in Calderdale. We would apply the maximum Council Tax premiums available on these empty homes to encourage landlords to bring them back into use.

Building on Brownfield Sites

There are many former industrial sites in Calderdale. This requires investment to get them into a suitable state for the sites to become profitable for developers. We would work via the West Yorkshire Combined Authority to unlock more of these sites and therefore reduce the amount of development required on the Greenbelt.

JAVED'S STORY

Javed Bashir - Chair of Calderdale Liberal Democrats

I have lived here all my life in Elland. My roots are firmly anchored in Calder Valley.

My grandfather came to Elland to fulfil the need for textile workers in the 1960s. I attended local primary schools and then The Brooksbank School before obtaining a place at the University of Huddersfield. I graduated with an Honours Degree in Business Administration and a Master's Degree in Innovation with Entrepreneurial Studies.

I met my wife Naseem in Leeds. Together we have four children - three boys and a girl. Naseem was previously a school teacher and currently works as a manager at a telecoms company and spends her spare time helping schools as a teaching assistant.

I am an Innovation & Funding Specialist with a passion for change and restoring economic prosperity of our local communities. I have over 20 years of experience working in industry in various sectors from helping launch start-ups to business transformation of global organisations.

Politics has suffered several blows in the past ten years and there is no one person that thinks we are better than before. Everyone is demanding change and a progressive future. I got involved in politics to make the difference people are demanding. We all deserve better and better can only be delivered when national policies serve the local communities.



A MODERN DEMOCRATIC AND EFFICIENT COUNCIL

Sorting out customer first and improving access to services online

Liberal Democrats are open to new ideas. That is why we would transform how the Council delivers services. We would ensure that it is easier to interact with the Council and the services you require with it via a mobile phone. We would also ensure the Council maps reported faults such as flytipping, potholes, street light repairs so you can see if a problem has been reported and when it will be fixed.

We would also sort out problems with customer first where problems people report are not getting fixed or passed onto the right officers.

A more commercially minded approach

Many local authorities are leading the way on the commercialisation agenda in Local Government. Sadly, Calderdale Council that managed to lose £60K a year running car boot sales is not one of them.

We would seek to examine all Council services to see where there are opportunities to generate more of a revenue for the local authority. This would mean fewer cuts to public services. When you are faced with a financial crisis you can either reduce your costs or increase your income. We would strive to do the later.



Local and fair decision making

Under the current system power is concentrated in the Town Hall in the hands of senior officers and cabinet members. We would establish area committees of ward Councillors to make decisions about Highways Spending, Safer Cleaner Greener activity, regeneration planning and services in their area. We would also ensure a fairer distribution of capital spending across all wards in Calderdale.

Scrapping the undemocratic cabinet system

Calderdale Council has 51 Councillors. Currently just 7 Councillors get to sit on a cabinet that has nearly all the decision-making powers. We would revert the Council back to the committee system, so every Councillor elected to represent an area got to participate in decision making about their community.

Give people power to shape their communities

Neighbourhood Plans give power to local people to shape their communities, for example, in deciding where new housing is built. We want to extend this opportunity to all communities across Calderdale. We would also encourage the establishment of new Town and Parish Councils.

Crowd-funding

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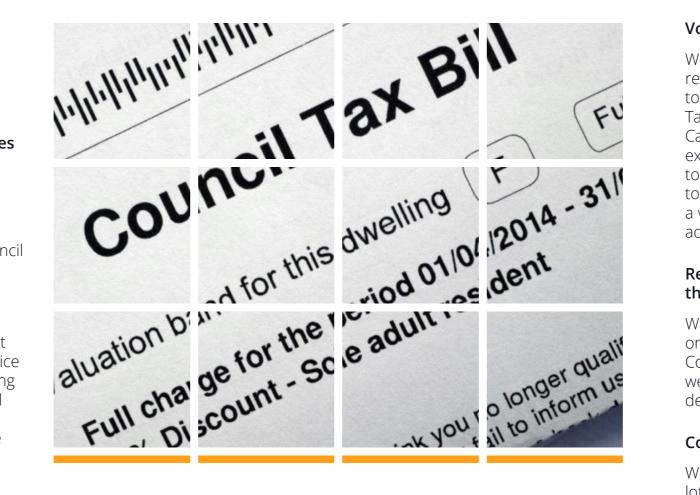
Liberal Democrats believe in empowering people and communities. That is why we would set up a website that allows people to fund-raise for small community capital projects.

Community management of assets and services

Where possible we would encourage community management of assets and Council services. This would help to reduce the cost of the Council in maintaining assets and give local people the opportunity to play a role in working with the Council to deliver services.

Mutual model for service delivery

It is the role of local Councillors to determine what services are needed, but the details of how a service is delivered would be best achieved by empowering our workforce. We would seek to promote mutual models of service delivery where worker cooperatives delivered more of the services that the Council provides.



Voluntary Overpayments of Council Tax

Westminster Council, and Islington wrote to its residents and asked them if they would be willing to make a voluntary extra payment in Council Tax. We believe there are many residents in Calderdale who might be willing to support extra services such as youth services, projects to help the disadvantaged, extra improvements to parks and public spaces. We would introduce a voluntary scheme where people could make additional contributions to Council services.

Reduce capital borrowing to protect against the cuts

We would ensure any capital schemes are done on an invest to save benefit. By reducing the Council's capital borrowing and debt repayments we would have more money to spend on delivering front-line services.

Council lottery scheme

We would work to establish a Council run local lottery scheme. Money raised from the lottery would be used for local good causes within Calderdale.

NIKKI'S STORY

Nikki Stocks - Liberal Democrat Candidate for Stansfield Ward

Nikki Stocks - I don't claim to be a politician - what I do is to stand up for my community which is like my second family.

Todmorden floods

As a multi-time flood victim, I can relate to the loss of property, trauma, exhaustion, and infections that always follow a flooding event. I am an active flood campaigner and was instrumental in reducing the added flood risk created by the Lidl development. Together with a fellow campaigner, I wrote an article that was published by the National Flood Forum concerning the community's battle with Lidl and Calderdale Council. Subsequently I was asked to join the Todmorden Flood group and became a Flood Warden.

I plan to bring this experience and expertise to Stansfield Ward to help protect usable flood containment and slow the flow areas. I will stand up against Calderdale Council when they attempt to build in unsuitable places, such as Denis' Field.

I'm so grateful for Healthy Minds Todmorden/Calderdale. They have changed the way I cope with depression, anxiety and PTSD, emotions increased by COVID. Disabled due to an accident, I now have limited mobility. This is where my other passion lies. I wish to work with others to make Todmorden accessible. I joined the Steering Group that pushed for lift access to the railway station. We pressurised the Town and Calderdale Councils, both of whom supported us, and we all worked with Network Rail to achieve this. Plans were passed and our station is due for major improvements.

From this, 'Accessibility Todmorden' was formed as a natural progression, the aim being to improve accessibility throughout the town. Our group was forced into unexpected hibernation when COVID and the lockdown happened last year. However, the group is intact, and I look forward to playing an active part within the group again.



HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE

Dementia village & more independent living accommodation

Liberal Democrats would seek to build a new 'Dementia Village'. This is an innovative way of providing social care to people suffering from the rising problem of Dementia. The dementia village would be based on the Hogeweyk project in the Netherlands and would provide care grounded in day to day life within society. We would also work to build more independent living accommodation units for Calderdale.

Building more bungalows

There is a chronic shortage of bungalows with disabled access for people living in Calderdale. We would seek to address this social care problem via our house building agenda.

Ensure that mental health gets a fair share of health spending

Improving mental health provision is a priority for Liberal Democrats nationally and locally. We want to invest more funding in mental health services and want to make sure that services in Calderdale are easily accessible for local people. While "talking therapies" are important, so are creative arts therapies and support and care services for people living with enduring mental illness.



Care closer to home

We would work towards ensuring everybody has easy access to health, well-being and care services in their local community. This would be provided and coordinated through a partnership between Calderdale Council, the NHS and local community groups.

Looking after our Children

Currently we have a society where many children are taken into care. These children are then placed in privately provided placements. The cost of this system is exorbitant and sadly many children in care have poor outcomes. At the same time many loving parents are turned away from adopting for reasons such as they have the wrong BMI.

We would seek to provide more of the provision of care placements within the public sector. We would do this by working with other authorities across the region to build new children's homes.

We would also seek to invest more in early intervention to try and keep more children with their birth families where possible. We want the best outcome for our children and that starts with examining the underlying social problems and causes as to why children have to be taken into care.

PAT'S STORY

Cllr Pat Allen

Like so many of us I've been in lock down for almost a year, but I've still found ways to help those in Elland who have been, and are, in difficulties; just as I've always done during the more than 21 years I've been a councillor. I helped found the Elland Food Bank some years ago and it has never been needed more, I'm there helping regularly, and often contacted by folk in need. I also help filling the family food bags, desperately needed by our children.

It is not acceptable for mothers to go hungry, so their children don't. If they come to the food-bank they get a lot more than they would from one of the Government's miserable food packs.

A message from Pat:

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"Firstly I want to thank all our health, care, teachers, emergency and essential workers for the skill, dedication and sheer hard work they have undertaken for so long. We owe you a huge debt of gratitude.

Secondly, please, if you are offered a vaccine accept it! Vaccination is a key element on our route back to a more normal life.

Finally, please obey the rules. They are hard, they are inconvenient and they can be difficult but they are necessary and will, along with vaccination, save lives and help us out of this crisis.

Thank you for the part you are playing in keeping us all safe."



PROTECTING YOUR RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS

Protecting Human Rights, Equalities & Diversity

We value everyone as an individual. That is why we want Calderdale to be a beacon for Human Rights, Equalities and Diversity. Too many people still face discrimination, prejudice and hatred and we are determined to stamp this out. We would ensure the Council is at the forefront of setting an example on the equalities agenda.

Tackling religious intolerance

We value being tolerant of others views and beliefs that is why a Liberal Democrat Council would work to tackle intolerance of others people's religious beliefs. We would also ensure that we treat everyone as individuals and do not give any special preferential treatment to any particular group of people.



Improving disabled access

It is shocking that there are still railway stations such as Todmorden that do not have full disabled access. We would seek to improve disabled access right across the Borough. Working with charities and NGOs to ensure our public spaces are accessible for all.

Privacy guidelines

We value everyone as an individual. That's why we would ensure Calderdale Council respects residents personal privacy and introduce a new gold standard for local government. We won't share or use your personal data for research without your consent; we will keep you informed about how your data is used. We will allow you to opt out of any profiling.

TRANSPORT

One-hour free car parking

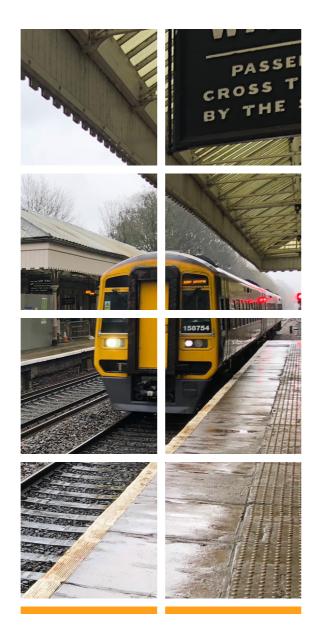
We believe in fighting poverty, and that the cost of parking is too high. Motorists are not all wealthy, and many people need a car in a semi-rural area such as Calderdale. We want to encourage people to shop locally in their own Towns. We would do this by ensuring that all of our Towns had one-hour free parking. This would boost local businesses whilst ensuring that parking spaces were not taken up all day long.

Campaign for better-integrated transport systems

We'll continue to press for significant improvement to the rail services (electrification of the Calder Valley line, modern railway carriages, the station at Elland) and we've protected and improved local buses. We're supporting more cycling and walking, and reducing carbon emissions (and cleaner air) by electric cars. But we want to do more than that and make certain that transport is properly integrated so the system works well for local people.

Powered two-wheelers (PTW)

We would develop a policy to support the use of powered two wheelers. These generally have power CO2 and congestion consequences as a form of transport.



MATT'S STORY

Cllr Matthew Doyle

I'm Matthew, I grew up in Todmorden and I'd like to tell you my story. I am a young carer, a student at college, and a Todmorden Town Councillor. However not everything is easy.

My family are struggling to find a property with suitable disabled access. There is a real shortage of properties like Bungalows across Calderdale. There are a few reasons for this, but one reason is because our local authority ranks bottom 15th in the country for building new homes.

We simply have a lack of affordable social housing to meet our needs. This has left many people in a difficult situation without proper access to a suitable home.

Building more homes would have also meant the Council received more of the 'new homes bonus'. This funding could have helped to protect us against cuts. Cuts such as the closure of the Youth Club, or Walsden Library. The club did amazing work and offered a safe space for young people to be themselves. It brings back many happy memories and I'm still disappointed to see it go.

I grew so frustrated with the failings of Calderdale Council that I decided to stand for the Liberal Democrats. I was successful and gained a seat on Todmorden Town Council. Now I'm standing for Calderdale Council as part of a movement of local residents who want to see change locally.

A CLEANER AND GREENER ENVIRONMENT

Litter

Litter is a problem on the rise in Calderdale. Often bins are left overflowing. Not many people are prosecuted for littering and there is little by way of any public campaign to keep our streets clean.

We would introduce a litter champion scheme and aim to use Ward Forum Grants to provide anyone with the tools to help clean up their street.

We would organise more community clean-ups with residents and seek to provide free tips in parts of the Borough with real problems.

Tackling Rats and Vermin

Sadly, there are increasing reports of rats and other vermin linked to fly-tipping and waste problems. We would review the Council's pest control service to ensure it is able to deal with this public health issue.

Calderdale Energy Company and faster action to reduce greenhouse gas emissions

We believe in protecting the environment so we would set the Council a tough target of becoming carbon neutral by 2030. We would also invest in community energy schemes and seek to set up our own energy company to supply energy produced in Calderdale to residents living in Calderdale.



Divestment from Fossil fuels

Shortly after declaring a climate emergency Calderdale Council became the landlords to a petrol station. We would introduce a policy of not investing in fossil fuels.

Real-time monitoring of air pollution

Poverty in health means that the poorest in our Borough die on average 10 years earlier than the richest parts of our Borough. Many of the poorest areas are those most affected by air polluting. That is why we would upgrade our capacity to monitor air pollution in Calderdale to provide residents of real-time information and warnings when pollution levels were high.

Opposition to fracking

We are opposed to fracking within Calderdale and will do everything we legally can to try and oppose any attempts to frack within Calderdale. We believe we should be transitioning to low-carbon energy production, not seeking new ways to extract even more fossil fuels from the ground.

Ban single-use plastic by the Council

Single-use plastic items such as cups, straws and plastic bags contribute to polluting our environment. Plastics take hundreds of years to break down and find their ways into our seas and Oceans. We think the Council should lead by example and stop using these materials in favour of more sustainable alternatives.

Back in to the top 10 in the country for recycling

Under a Liberal Democrat Council leader in 2012-13 Calderdale reached the top 10 Council's in the country for recycling. Since then, our recycling rates have dropped. A primary cause for this is the failings in the current collection service that result from when it was re-tendered. When this contract expires, we would seek major improvements. Reviewing the wheelie bin and recycling containers. Improving the level of recycling collections and reliability. We would also seek to ensure our food waste goes back to being composted and bio-digestion rather than being sent to an incinerator.

Electric Buses

A Liberal Democrat Council would work to providing a fleet of electric buses to operate around Town Centres. We would support free hop on and hop off buses in Halifax Town Centre.



Tackling Derelict Sites & Enforcing Planning

Calderdale Council has taken a lax approach to using its legal powers to ensure owners of derelict sites and properties tidy up their sites. We would develop a new policy to ensure a pro-active use of the Council's legal right under Section 215 of the Town and Country Planning Act to force the site owners to tidy up the Halifax Road and Burnley Road derelict sites.

We would also ensure the Council's planning department actively enforces conditions of planning permissions.

Insulation and affordable warmth

We believe in fighting poverty and protecting the environment. We would push public health spending towards providing insulation for people living in cold homes. Cold homes result in premature deaths and a lack of insulation contributes to forcing people into poverty that has an adverse effect on their physical and mental health. We would launch a major affordable warmth scheme.

Cycling

We would seek to promote cycling and ringfence a percentage of all Highways Spending to improve cycling infrastructure.

SEAN'S STORY

Sean Bamforth - Liberal Democrat Campaigner in Ovenden

All across the North of England there are communities that have been left behind, that feel ignored and frustrated. In Calderdale we see regeneration projects occurring in our Town centres, but we must not leave people living outside of these centres behind.

Much of North Halifax has experienced the brunt of the cuts. We have lost the Threeways Centre, and now risk losing the Mixenden Activity Centre. It is hard to feel excited about regeneration occurring elsewhere when the street you live on is being neglected.

When I speak to people they talk of concerns such as the poor state of the roads, litter and dog fouling and fly-tipping. I believe the Council has lost sight of tackling these bread and butter issues and the day-to-day concerns of people.

I'm not interested in fighting the culture wars, I'm interested in pavement politics. Fixing our streets and the tangible things that impact on everyone's quality of life. I want to give people living in North Halifax the voice they deserve in our Council chamber and ensure no community in Calderdale is left behind.



EDUCATION AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Protecting small schools

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In many rural communities, small schools are an essential part of the local community. We would pledge to protect small schools that are performing well from closures or mergers.

Vocational training

We would ensure the Council promotes apprenticeships and vocational training. We would seek to open a skills centre in partnership with local businesses and manufactures to ensure we had a workforce that was trained for the future needs of our economy.

Improving key stage five education

Calderdale under-performs in terms of its KS5 education standards. We support the opening of a new sixth form college to help improve the education standards of students wishing to take A-Level courses within Calderdale. We also recognise that different areas of Calderdale need local access to KS5 education, and would support any new college having a satellite site to cover the geography of the Borough.



Tackling the lack of diversity in schools

In Halifax, we have schools that are divided between White British communities and British Asian communities. We believe that this lack of diversity in our schools will lead to a more divided society. We will seek to work with schools on projects to address this issue and bring people from different cultural and religious backgrounds together as residents of Calderdale.

More funding for youth projects

We believe there should be more structured activities for young people to participate in across the Borough. We would seek to increase the number of youth workers to ensure our young people are supported into becoming happy, creative and constructive adults.

COMMUNITY SAFETY AND RESILIENCE

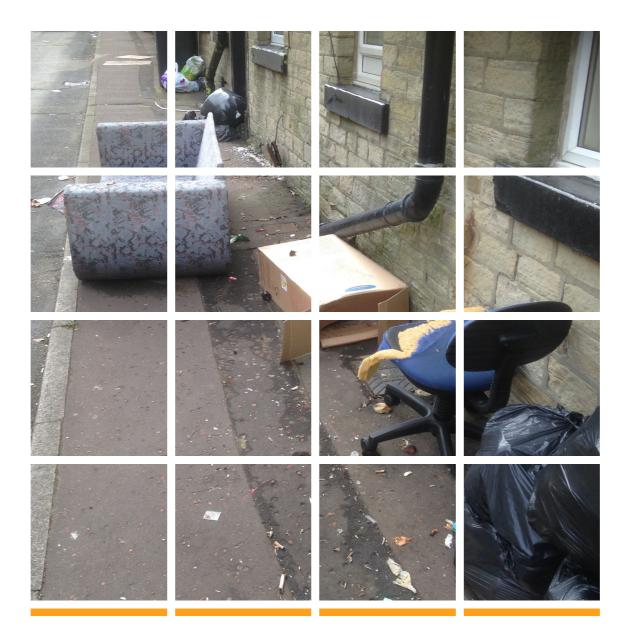
Supporting action to tackle dangerous driving and speeding

We would ensure Council resources are used for traffic calming measures in areas where speeding is a problem. We would also support community speed watch initiatives to help residents monitor speeds in their communities.

Tackling anti-social behaviour

Anti-social behaviour is on the rise across Calderdale. It is committed by people from all age groups and backgrounds. We would ensure the Council uses its legal powers at its disposal such as Community Protection Notices and Public Space Protection Orders to help tackle this problem. We would also work to ensure the provision of more Council and Community services designed to encourage people into constructive and creative activity.

We would also seek to tackle the causes of antisocial behaviour by linking services together. All too often environmental problems, mental health issues or poverty can contribute to unhealthy environments in which anti-social behaviour flourishes.



Community based flood resilience

We would work with the local community to develop and train more community flood wardens and to ensure Town Councils had an active role in supporting flood resilience and recovery work. We think we need much more community involvement in official flood and recovery plans.

Preparation and resilience.

Sadly, the COVID-19 pandemic exposed how poorly prepared Local Government is for dealing with some risks. We would ensure the work of the West Yorkshire Resilience Forum is taken far more seriously and more effort is put into preparing our society for risks. From flooding to snowing, to power cuts and pandemics. Being prepared is key to protecting people's livelihoods and well-being.

Fly-tipping

Fly-tipping is a major problem in Calderdale. We would get tougher on those who commit this crime and invest in new CCTV traps, no fly-tipping signage to catch offenders. We will also tackle the causes of fly-tipping. A poor bulky waste collection service, excessive charges at tips, and further education as to how to dispose of waste legally are all required.

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