

AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE LIBERAL DEMOCRAT AND LABOUR GROUPS

Liberal Democrat Group/Labour Group provisional agreement

The Liberal Democrat and Labour groups acknowledge that no party has overall control of the county council. Both groups are fully committed to ensure we provide the people of Lancashire with services in an open and democratic way, and ensure the county council has a strong, stable and open leadership.

This is an agreement to support the Labour Party to form a minority administration on the basis of supporting their nomination for Leader of the county council.

Whilst other matters which go to Full Council will be decided on a case by case basis (supply and confidence), it is our full intention wherever possible to reach a consensus on policy and budget decisions before Full Council meetings.

Political Changes

- Open democracy for all service areas. We will work with officers to set up advisory groups, initially working within Older Peoples' Services, with all party involvement.
- District Forums (or Committees) will be made up of County, District and Parish Councillor(s) with delegated funding and decision making powers and public access.
- Appropriate constitutional amendments and additional committee structures to be agreed
- Set up a budget working group to achieve budget reductions to bridge the funding shortfall
- Modify the constitution to ensure that both the first and second opposition groups have a place at the cabinet table by right.

County-Wide Policy

The following sets out a number of agreed priorities and approaches which the Groups will look to implement and adopt where possible. However the document in no way replaces or prejudices the proper decision making processes of the county council and it is acknowledged that the objectives set out will need to be properly assessed and costed etc in accordance with county council procedures.

The prime role of council is to provide the infrastructure to promote sustainable economic growth and to support the vulnerable. Our priority is to protect front line services within a balanced budget framework. Agreement will be needed on how to achieve budget reductions to bridge the funding shortfall.

Environment

- Feasibility study for the use of county owned sites for energy generation.
- A green energy plan to develop green industries worth about £5m over two years from 2014 to 2016. This could be developed via a rotating pot to supplement the allocation of the Growing Places Fund from central government and targeted at sustainable businesses.
- A priority for both parties is an urgent review of the provision of HWRCs throughout Lancashire with a particular focus to open a facility in Colne.
- If fracking is to come into the County it must:
 - be subject to appropriate, industry specific regulation,
 - be subject to a regular, rigorous inspection regime
 - provide social, environmentally acceptable, and financial benefits for the County
- The County should lobby hard for the (town and country) planning function to remain with the County (and not with the secretary of state/PINS) for "surface planning" - i.e. gas pipelines (i.e. extracted gas), highways issues, water supply and disposal (a major issue as fracking uses huge quantities), landscaping issues.

Social Care

- Social care to provide early warning of individual difficulties with particular reference to dementia care.
- Support for carers by respite enhancement.

Children and young people

- Expansion of available classroom capacity to accommodate increased school intakes as appropriate.
- Explore ways to resource the extension of 15 hours of free early years education to cover out of term time weeks.
- Youth and Community Centres – no charge for use by voluntary and community groups; moratorium on further closures; consideration of property asset transfer for community use.
- We will continue to support schools that wish to remain part of the LEA Family.

Public Health

- Ensure local input within the Public Health function.

Economy

- A commitment to the provision of the resources to help create economic growth and jobs across Lancashire, particularly East Lancashire.
- We will drive forward the EZs and the Preston City Deal with partners and will strongly promote the development of a National Aerospace Supply Chain Centre and Skill City to support more apprenticeships.
- Eliminate duplication in service provision.
- Pursue shared services with districts and other counties.
- Share services with mutually owned enterprises and the private sector as appropriate:
 - Ensure that working conditions within all shared services are appropriate.
 - Ensure that the quality of front line contact service provision is appropriate regardless of the source through which it is provided.
- There are many excellent services LCC provides eg to Schools – we would look to market them to other LAs. Partnership working across the Districts, and Police, and Health is absolutely key to preventing service reductions.

Staff

- Introduce the Living Wage for Council employees - but not at the expense of maintaining differentials. The council will explore all options for delivering this ambition.

Transport

- County wide sustainable transport planning to support the development of the county economy.
- Find mechanisms to reinstate bus routes and community bus services in areas of deprivation and rural areas around the county and approach central government for financial support reinstatement of illuminated bus timetables where applicable.
- Press for Government support of the trans-Pennine rail route through reopening of Colne/Skipton line.

Highways

- Highway services to be reviewed to improve practice and repairs.
- Review winter gritting routes to provide better service to residential areas in hilly areas.
- Review grit bin provision with a view to providing additional bins in areas of need.
- Rebalance funding for pavement and highway repairs.
- Continued support for 20mph limits residential areas with additional engineered solutions where necessary.
- Increase in the amount of Highways Contingency allocation of £5,000 for County Councillors - OR increased participation by County Councillors in highways commissioning.
- Visible enforcement of 20mph limits in residential areas using portable SpIDs.
- Feasibility study for the expansion of cycling initiatives.
- Establish fund for making up Private Streets and implement programme - To be explored with districts.

Superfast Broadband

- Publish the programme for roll-out of superfast Broadband with early implementation across the County.

23 May 2013