



COLCHESTER CITY COUNCIL
LOCAL ELECTION MANIFESTO 2026

Executive Summary

Putting Colchester’s Communities First

Colchester is a city with a proud history and a strong future. In recent years, Liberal Democrat councillors have delivered real, practical improvements for residents.

We have strengthened homelessness prevention, invested in council housing, secured major regeneration funding for the city centre, and continued to support parks, leisure and essential services, all while maintaining a responsible, balanced budget. We want to continue that progress.

Our Priorities

<p>Responsible Finances</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maintain a balanced budget ● Protect essential services ● Improve transparency and digital access ● Secure investment for Colchester 	<p>Supporting Residents</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Strengthen cost of living support ● Work with local charities and voluntary groups ● Promote access to grants and benefits ● Support community initiatives such as warm spaces
<p>Tackling Homelessness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue prevention-first approach ● Expand support for those at risk ● Work with housing providers and charities ● Help people move into stable, long-term homes 	<p>Cleaner, Safer Neighbourhoods</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Invest in street cleaning and waste services ● Tackle fly-tipping and environmental crime ● Improve recycling ● Support parks, green spaces, and community pride
<p>Protecting the Environment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Continue tree planting and biodiversity work ● Improve energy efficiency in council buildings ● Protect green spaces and local environments 	<p>Homes That Work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Build and improve council housing ● Ensure infrastructure supports new development ● Protect existing communities ● Plan growth responsibly
<p>A Thriving Local Economy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Support local businesses and high streets ● Strengthen the city centre ● Encourage investment and job creation ● Promote tourism and regeneration 	<p>Health and Wellbeing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Protect leisure centres and sports facilities ● Invest in parks and community spaces ● Support mental health and reduce isolation
<p>Inclusive Communities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Promote fairness, equality, and opportunity ● Support diverse and welcoming communities ● Ensure dignity and respect in all services 	<p>Quality of Life</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Invest in Arts, Culture and Heritage ● Help Colchester be a great place to live, work and visit, for all. ● Stand behind our liberal, inclusive values

Our Commitment

Liberal Democrat councillors work year-round in the community, listening and delivering. We believe in practical solutions, responsible leadership, and putting residents first.

Together, we can continue building a cleaner, greener, healthier and more inclusive Colchester.

Colchester City Liberal Democrat Manifesto

Over recent years Colchester City Council has continued to deliver practical improvements for residents. The council has strengthened homelessness prevention services, helping more people access support before they reach crisis point, while continuing to invest in council housing and support for vulnerable residents. Significant investment has also been secured for the city centre, including the transformation of St Nicholas Square and progress on major regeneration projects such as the Digital Forum. Across the city, the council continues to invest in parks, leisure facilities and public spaces while delivering essential services through a responsible and balanced budget. These achievements demonstrate what can be achieved when the council focuses on practical solutions and works closely with local communities and partners.

Putting Colchester's Communities First

Colchester is a city with a proud history and a strong future. Our communities are growing, our economy is evolving, and residents rightly expect a council that listens and delivers.

Liberal Democrat councillors work year-round with residents, businesses, and community groups to improve neighbourhoods across our city. We believe local government should be practical, transparent, and focused on solving problems.

Over recent years we have made real progress, from protecting vital services to reducing homelessness and investing in our city's future. We want to continue that journey.

Our priorities are clear: cleaner neighbourhoods, responsible finances, support for those who need it most, and a city that grows in a way that benefits everyone.

Responsible Finances and Good Governance

Residents deserve a council that manages public money carefully and makes decisions openly.

We will:

- ◆ Maintain a balanced council budget
- ◆ Protect essential services while improving efficiency
- ◆ Continuously improve transparency around how council money is spent
- ◆ Improve access to council services through modern digital systems
- ◆ Work constructively with partners across Essex to secure investment for Colchester

Good local government is about delivering results while protecting the services people rely on.

Supporting Residents Through the Cost of Living Crisis

Many households continue to feel pressure from rising costs. While local government cannot solve the national cost of living crisis alone, it can make a difference.

We will:

- ◆ Continue supporting local cost of living advice and assistance services
- ◆ Strengthen partnerships with voluntary organisations helping vulnerable residents
- ◆ Promote take-up of available grants, benefits, and energy support schemes
- ◆ Support community initiatives such as warm spaces and food support networks
- ◆ Ensure council decisions consider the impact on households facing financial pressure

Our aim is simple: no one in Colchester should feel unsupported when they are struggling.

Tackling Homelessness and Supporting Vulnerable Residents

Reducing homelessness has been one of the council's most important achievements in recent years. We are proud of the progress made and remain committed to continuing that work.

We will:

- ◆ Continue investing in services that prevent homelessness before it happens
- ◆ Expand support for residents at risk of losing their homes
- ◆ Work with housing providers and charities to provide stable accommodation
- ◆ Support initiatives that help people move from temporary accommodation into permanent homes

Homelessness is complex, but sustained local action can make a real difference.

Cleaner Streets and Neighbourhood Pride

Residents want to live in neighbourhoods that are clean, safe, and well cared for.

We will:

- ◆ Maintain strong investment in street cleaning and waste services
- ◆ Continue action against fly-tipping and environmental crime
- ◆ Improve recycling services and reduce waste where possible
- ◆ Invest in parks, play areas, and green spaces across the city
- ◆ Work with residents' groups and volunteers to support neighbourhood improvement

A clean and attractive city benefits everyone.

Protecting Our Environment

Colchester's natural environment is one of our greatest assets. We will continue practical action to protect it.

We will:

- ◆ Continue tree planting and to protect important green spaces and the nature corridors between them.
- ◆ Improve biodiversity in parks and open spaces
- ◆ Improve energy efficiency in council buildings and housing
- ◆ Work with partners to improve water quality and environmental protection

Local environmental action improves quality of life for current and future generations.

Homes That Work for Local People

Colchester needs more homes, but growth must be planned carefully and supported by the right infrastructure.

We will:

- ◆ Continue building and improving council housing
- ◆ Work to reduce homelessness and housing insecurity
- ◆ Ensure new developments include green space and community facilities
- ◆ Protect the character of established neighbourhoods
- ◆ Work with planning partners to ensure infrastructure keeps pace with growth, whilst recognising that this is a complex area

Housing growth should strengthen communities rather than overwhelm them.

A Thriving Local Economy and City Centre

Colchester's economy is diverse and growing. We want to support businesses and ensure the city centre remains vibrant.

We will:

- ◆ Work with businesses and partners to strengthen the city centre
- ◆ Support independent businesses and local high streets
- ◆ Encourage investment and job creation across Colchester
- ◆ Promote tourism, culture, and heritage as economic strengths
- ◆ Support regeneration projects that bring new life to key areas of the city including a new bus station/transport interchange

A strong local economy creates opportunity for residents across Colchester.

Health, Wellbeing, and Active Communities

Healthy communities are at the heart of a successful city.

We will:

- ◆ Protect and improve leisure centres and sports facilities
- ◆ Invest in parks, play areas, and open spaces
- ◆ Support community centres and voluntary organisations including the foodbank
- ◆ Work with health partners to support healthier lifestyles
- ◆ Promote activities that reduce isolation and improve mental wellbeing

Wellbeing is about more than healthcare. It is about strong communities and supportive environments.

Inclusion, Fairness, and Liberal Democrat Values

Colchester is a diverse and welcoming city. We believe everyone should feel respected, included, and able to participate fully in community life.

We will:

- ◆ Promote equality, diversity, and inclusion across council services
- ◆ Support initiatives that bring communities together
- ◆ Ensure council policies treat people fairly and with dignity
- ◆ Promote opportunities for young people and underrepresented groups
- ◆ Maintain the Liberal Democrat tradition of open, community-focused politics

Our values are simple: fairness, compassion, and respect.

Quality of Life

Liberal Democrat councillors know that residents need access to key services, help when most in need and all that makes for a healthy and vibrant city.

With:

- ◆ A 'multi-faith help for all' place of sanctuary way of working and welcome that helps inclusion and sense of community
- ◆ New investment in community facilities and playparks, across the city
- ◆ Continued support for our award-winning arts, culture, and heritage.
- ◆ Events that range from musicals to panto and our own Council company's summer concerts season

A vibrant city becoming a destination, attractive to young and old, a great place to live, work and visit.

Working With Our Communities

Liberal Democrat councillors believe politics should be rooted in the community. We spend time in neighbourhoods across Colchester listening to residents and working with them to solve problems.

Together we can continue building a cleaner, greener, healthier, more inclusive city.

Putting Colchester's Communities First.