

Minister outlines vision for housing ahead of opening new £100m development

Communities Minister Gordon Lyons has set out his priorities for housing, including building more social homes and providing more affordable housing options.

Murphy welcomes 15 training places on Assured Skills Academy with Treliant

Economy Minister Conor Murphy today welcomed 15 high quality training places for people with a degree in any discipline on the Financial Crime Compliance Assured Skills Academy with Treliant.

Minister announces new £5m programme for entrepreneurs and high growth start-ups

Economy Minister Conor Murphy today announced a new programme of support to help early-stage, technology-based, start-up businesses and entrepreneurs become global businesses of the future.

The Funding Crisis in Local Government

Roads riddled with dangerous potholes, bus routes disappearing, breakfast clubs vanishing, youth services gone, the elderly are left without the care they deserve, bin collections less and less frequent. This isn't some distant dystopia; **it's the reality faced by communities across our country today.**

Rishi Sunak and his Conservative Government have left a blackhole in the

finances of local councils. They're hoping you won't notice that they're to blame for when the services you rely on are stopped dead by a lack of funding.

The Conservatives have cut councils' funding by a quarter since 2016 in real terms. Parliament's cross-party local government select committee's report, released this year, found "systemic underfunding of local councils in England" and a £4bn hole in council funding for 2024/25.

This Conservative chaos leaves 1 in 5 councils in England now believing that it is likely that they will become insolvent in the next 18 months.

It's a crisis that knows no party lines – Labour, Liberal Democrat, Conservative – all councils are feeling the pinch. And at least 40 Conservative MPs have joined calls for more support from the Government.

Liberal Democrats have long called on the Government to properly fund local services – from health and social care to transport; to give local authorities more powers to deliver for their communities; and to reform business rates to boost local economies.

Today, Liberal Democrats have passed new policy calling to address the funding shortfall and get our vital local services back on their feet:

- **Urgent Funding for Local Authorities:** Close the current £4 billion funding gap immediately identified by the cross-party local government select committee.
- **Support for Local Services:** Recognise the vital role of local authorities and ensure they have the resources they need to deliver essential services for the long term.
- **Addressing the Crisis in Social Care:** 70p of every £1 of top-tier council spending goes to adult and children's social care, we must build a consensus on long-term funding of social care.
- **Taking On the Big Challenges:** Support the LGA's 'Make It Local' campaign, which outlines how local government is key to delivering solutions to the biggest issues for the public.

Read our new policy

It's time for change. We cannot sit idly by as our local services crumble. Liberal Democrats will always stand up for a fair deal for communities.

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Beyond Rwanda: A Fairer Way Forward on Asylum

In the ongoing saga of the Conservative Government's Rwanda asylum scheme, the truth is clear: it's destined to fail.

This policy is **immoral, unworkable and extortionately expensive** for the taxpayer. And it betrays our country's proud tradition of offering sanctuary to those in need.

When the Conservatives first came up with this scheme, we told them it was wrong and wouldn't work. It's unsurprising that three Home Secretaries and millions of taxpayers' pounds later, the Conservatives still have nothing to show for their failing Rwanda policy.

The fact that this Government is content to squander millions on a totally unworkable white elephant of a policy tells you everything you need to know about their priorities.

It will do nothing to stop dangerous Channel crossings, people trafficking or modern slavery. All Rishi Sunak cares about is acting tough. So much so that he's content to trample the rule of law and tear up human rights protection.

That's why this Conservative Government refuses to even consider doing what would actually work to stop the dangerous crossings – tackling the backlog and creating safe and legal routes for refugees.

Liberal Democrats have been clear – we have no faith in this failing scheme. Today, we have passed new policy to keep fighting this policy every step of the way, and to offer a positive alternative that would actually work:

- **Scrap the Rwanda Scheme:** This failing policy has cost taxpayers at least £241 million, money that could have been spent on crucial services.
- **Uphold Human Rights:** Reaffirm the UK's commitment to upholding the important human rights legislation, including the European Convention on Human Rights and the UN Refugee Convention.
- **Tackle the Backlog:** The asylum system is in disarray, with 128,000 people still waiting for an initial decision on their claim. The government should establish a new, dedicated unit to process claims quickly and fairly.
- **Create Safe and Legal Routes:** An expanded refugee resettlement scheme and the creation of humanitarian travel permits to undercut the people traffickers and help those fleeing war and violence.
- **Give Asylum Seekers the Right to Work:** Manage the costs of the system and give individuals a sense of dignity and purpose.

Read our new policy

It's time for the Conservative Government to admit defeat on the Rwanda scheme. It's not just failing; it's actively harming individuals and wasting taxpayer money.

Instead, let's focus on what truly works: tackling the backlog, creating safe routes, and upholding our commitment to human rights. As Liberal Democrats, we will continue to fight for a fairer and more compassionate asylum system.

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