

Association of Liberal Democrat Councillors Strategic Plan 2011-2015

Dear Members and Partners of ALDC

Please find below a draft Strategic Plan for ALDC which aims to cover the remainder of the current Westminster Parliament.

The Plan sets out how we will achieve on two proposed core objectives:

- (1) For there to be more Liberal Democrat Councillors, at every level, throughout Great Britain
- (2) For Liberal Democrat Councillors to be the best

And a proposed third supporting objective:

- (3) For ALDC to have the capacity for success, now and in the future.

ALDC has a long and successful history in its own right and through its predecessor organisations the Association of Liberal Councillors and the Association of Social Democrat Councillors. For last 43 years we have helped develop a style of community campaigning which has meant that we have grown to a position where 1 in 5 principle councillors in Britain is a Liberal Democrat.

We want the next step to see further advances at a local level, but we also want a Party which transforms community campaigning into something fit for the 21st century.

We recognise that the coming years are going to be both different and challenging to Liberal Democrats as we react to our first period of Government in Westminster for many decades.

What this proposed Strategic Plan sets out is how ALDC is continuing to change as an organisation:

- we are changing from an organisation where the largest source of income was a Party Grant, to one where our largest source of income is our members.
- we are changing from an organisation that mainly provides advice and support to all Liberal Democrats, to one which focuses this effort on ALDC members
- we are changing from an organisation which gets information out using printed materials, including selling printed publications, to one which distributes information online
- we are changing from an organisation which was sometimes seen as distant to one which achieves for Liberal Democrat councillors by working well with partner organisations.
- we are changing from an organisation which has sometimes been seen as 'old fashioned', to one which has high standards of quality and innovation at its heart.

We hope that this plan sets out a process of how we will move forward on these changes over the next four years. For 2011 we've set out some key in-year developments, and will review these each year as the Parliament progresses.

We hope that you like this plan, and would very much welcome any comments or suggestions that you might have.

Cllr Kath Pinnock
Chair

Cllr Tim Pickstone
Chief Executive

1: “For there to be more Liberal Democrat Councillors, at every level, throughout Great Britain”

1a	Specific Development Priorities in 2011
<p>We will provide advice, support and information to Liberal Democrat local election candidates and their team:</p> <p>Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- we will collate information on Lib Dem target and development candidates in British local elections.- we will provide a briefing service for candidates and their agents in the months running up to the election including campaigning and strategic advice, election law advice and practical help and ideas, we will continue this up to the deadline for election expenses.- We will provide a candidate’s ‘helpline’ (telephone and online) for the months running up to the local elections through to the election expenses deadline.	<p>Build on the 2010 Candidates Handbook for 2011 and establish this as a regular resource for candidates.</p> <p>Specifically help candidates/agents with strategy around fighting local elections as a party of Government.</p> <p>How we will monitor our success</p> <p>Local Election results.</p> <p>A post-election survey of candidates to evaluate the service they receive (to be undertaken each May).</p>
1b	Specific Development Priorities in 2011
<p>We will enable the distribution of financial resources to allow Liberal Democrats to effectively fight local elections.</p> <p>Specifically:</p>	<p>Specifically develop better links with Regional Parties in England around G8 to best link into their own Winning Teams or other developmental work. Also Scotland and Wales for the 2012 local elections.</p> <p>To launch during 2011 an ALDC fundraising appeal, to be known as the Maggie Clay Fund, to provide small amounts of resource for Lib Dem black hole areas.</p>

	<p>How we will monitor our success</p> <p>Local election results.</p> <p>An annual report of G8 which evaluates the number of local parties who have benefited from support, and the success in individual wards supported by G8 (report each summer).</p> <p>An annual report of the Maggie Clay Fund detailing the amount of monies raised and the number of local parties that have been able to be supported and the success that they have seen (report each summer from 2012).</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - we will seek to ensure the continued existence of a “G8” scheme of grants, administered by ALDC, to allow for an effective distribution of resources between regions and through the electoral cycle - working with our partners in regional/state parties and the Campaigns Department, we will seek to use G8 grants to develop best campaigning practice, and support local parties to develop their own campaign plans. - We will develop an additional source of funding to help Liberal Democrat ‘black holes’ get off the ground through grants, training and mentoring 	

1c	Specific Development Priorities in 2011
<p>We will give Lib Dem volunteer campaigners the tools to campaign for the Liberal Democrats through the provision of resources and materials.</p> <p>Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We will produce templates for campaign literature which can be used by volunteer Liberal Democrat campaigners and make these available to our members online. (Need to be mindful about Wales and Scotland) - We will produce campaign packs, materials and ideas to help Liberal Democrats campaign effectively on a local level. - We will help promote the existence of campaign materials produced by other parts of the Party. <p>We will promote and celebrate best practice of Liberal Democrat campaigning, including through an annual awards programme.</p>	<p>We will significantly improve on the quality of the artwork templates we produce and circulate.</p> <p>We will identify the correct role for ALDC in the production of ‘campaign packs’ and significantly improve on the quality of those that we produce, including specifically better communication with the Campaigns Department.</p> <p>How we will monitor our success</p> <p>Local election results.</p> <p>An annual post-election survey of members to assess how well received campaign resources are (survey each September).</p> <p>Number of Downloads</p>
1d	Specific Development Priorities in 2011

We will enable Liberal Democrat volunteer campaigners to campaign effectively for the Liberal Democrats through the provision of training and guidance.

Specifically:

- We will play our part in the provision of training to volunteer campaigners, and from this provide training for volunteer Lib Dem campaigners at conferences and at our own standalone training events.
- We will play our part in the provision of guidance to volunteer campaigners, and from this produce guidance on campaigning for Liberal Democrat campaigners and make this available throughout the Party.

We will undertake a review of campaigner training and implement the outcomes of this review.

We will identify the most appropriate way to produce (and sell?) guidance, including looking at online paid for downloads, starting with the production of guidance to replace the 2007 "Winning Election" series.

How we will monitor our success

Number of people who attend ALDC training and their evaluation.
Annual Training Report to Management Committee (each February).

1e

Specific Development Priorities in 2011

We will be the primary source of intelligence within the party of local elections and local by-elections.

Specifically:

- We will monitor and evaluate the Liberal Democrat performance in local elections and report on this to members, the Party and the public as appropriate.
- We will gather intelligence in advance of local elections, of potential success and challenges.
- We will maintain accurate details of Council balance, control and Liberal Democrat group leadership and make this available to members, the Party and public as appropriate.
- We will monitor local by-elections,

We will continue to make better use of IT in our by-election reporting service, and online information on local elections and council composition/leadership.

How we will monitor our success

and monitor and evaluate Liberal Democrat performance, and report on this to members, the Party and the public as appropriate.

2 “For Liberal Democrat Councillors to be the best”

2a	Specific Development Priorities in 2011
<p>We will be the primary source of information, support and advice for Liberal Democrat councillors.</p> <p>Specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We will provide a year-round telephone and online helpline to provide advice and information to councillors (who are ALDC members). 	<p>Give greater clarity about our advice being for ALDC members only.</p> <p>Specifically look at how we can provide access to legal advice to councillors who are ALDC members.</p> <p>To build on the 2010 Councillors' Handbook, and establish this as a regular part of ALDC's work output.</p> <p>Standards of Lib Dem councillors post Standards Board</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We will produce and make available to our members, and occasionally to the wider body of Lib Dem councillors, information and guidance on being a Councillor, and ensure access to information provided by others. - We will provide, or ensure access to, training for Liberal Democrat councillors at events such as federal and local government conferences. 	<p>How we will monitor our success</p> <p>Annual councillors survey (each September).</p> <p>Number of advice requests received, hits to appropriate sections of our website, through to an annual report to Management Committee on advice and support (each February).</p>
2b	Specific Development Priorities in 2011
<p>We will help Lib Dem councillors make a Liberal Democrat difference at a local level.</p> <p>Specifically:</p>	<p>Better use of the Editorial section of the ALDC website.</p> <p>Look at how ALDC can play a role in promoting better communication between the national party and local government activists, including good links with LGA Liberal Democrat Group.</p> <p>Local manifesto help / tool / best practice (with wales/Scotland exceptions).</p>

	How we will monitor our success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We will provide opportunities for sharing and promoting best practice in publications, online and at conferences. - We will promote Liberal Democrat achievements at a local level in the wider Party and local government family. - We will work with the Party to ensure better communication (two-way) between Liberal Democrats working at local, state national and European levels. 	Annual councillors survey.

2c	Specific Development Priorities in 2011
<p>We will help enable political leadership and ambition in Liberal Democrat councillors and council groups.</p> <p>Specifically:</p>	<p>Build on the 2010 Group Leaders Day, to develop this as a regular part of ALDC's programme.</p> <p>Specifically develop the package we are able to offer to Lib Dem Council Groups around group away days, linking into our volunteer network.</p>
	How we will monitor our success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - we will work with Liberal Democrat Group Leaders, and their deputies, to help develop political ambition and leadership, and to share best practice and solutions. - we will work with Liberal Democrat council groups to help them develop, grow and function effectively, specifically though encouraging regular facilitated group away days. - We will work with other partners to ensure that Liberal Democrat councillors have access to effective leadership training and support. 	<p>Annual survey of councillors.</p> <p>Annual report on advice and support.</p>

2d	Specific Development Priorities in 2011
<p>We will develop and provide appropriate tools and resources which allow Liberal Democrat councillors to function more effectively.</p> <p>Specifically:</p>	<p>Roll out of the 2010-2011 upgrades to the MyCouncillor system, and work to get more sites re-activated and supported through help and information.</p> <p>Develop a directory of useful resources of Lib Dem councillors and local campaigners, with commercial tie-ins as appropriate.</p> <p>Put the AV button on all websites</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - maintain and enhance the “MyCouncillor” system of websites for Lib Dem councillors and campaigners, aiming for this to be the primary source of local councillors’ websites in Britain. - look at other potential tools for councillors, either as bespoke resources, or commercial tie-ins with other organisations or companies, that can be developed to support Lib Dem councillors and their work. 	<p>How we will monitor our success</p> <p>Number of MyCouncillor websites.</p> <p>Annual councillors survey.</p>

3 “For ALDC to have a strong and secure future”

3a	Specific Development Priorities in 2011
<p>For most Lib Dem Councillors to want to join ALDC, together with campaigners, candidates and supporters.</p> <p>Specifically:</p>	<p>Refresh of Campaigner magazine in 2011.</p> <p>Specific developments to the website, including linking in our Councillors database to provide a directory service and refining how we best provide information to our members.</p> <p>Focus on quality and customer service, including extending our (new) councillors/members database to enable us to track member interactions effectively.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We will maintain active programmes of membership recruitment and retention, including further developing our group membership and discounted membership schemes. - We will ensure a good level of communications with our members, including an appropriate mix of paper and electronic communications, and a high quality website. - We will maintain excellent standards of quality and individual customer service which is responsive to our members. 	<p>How we will monitor our success</p> <p>Number of members, number of councillor members, and levels of retention of members.</p> <p>Annual members survey.</p> <p>Monitoring complaints and compliments from members.</p> <p>Website hits and hits to relevant sections.</p>

3b	Specific Development Priorities in 2011
<p>We will ensure that ALDC has a strong and stable financial footing.</p> <p>Specifically:</p>	<p>Launching an ongoing fundraising appeal, the Maggie Clay Fund, to provide support for Lib Dem ‘black hole’ areas.</p> <p>Develop other new areas of income, specifically around areas of our work that could/can attract sponsorship and around paid for downloads.</p>

	How we will monitor our success
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We will ensure that we carefully plan our income and expenditure, and maintain high standards of budgetary and financial control and reporting. - We will seek to develop and maintain diverse sources of income, for members, grants (including the Party), trading, sponsorship and fundraising. - We will seek to maintain an appropriate level of reserves to ensure appropriate security and operational flexibility. 	<p>Levels of reserves are met.</p> <p>Income and expenditure are within agreed budgets.</p>

3c	Specific Development Priorities in 2011
<p>That ALDC is a strong and successful team of its volunteers, staff and members.</p> <p>Specifically:</p>	<p>Further development of the volunteer programme started in 2010, as a core part of how ALDC delivers its work.</p> <p>Building on the start we made in 2010 to involve members more in decision making and enabling members to input into what we do.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We will be a good employer of staff, we will set high standards for what we expect from staff as well as being a welcoming and rewarding place to work. - We will develop how we use volunteers as a good delivery agent of our work programme. - We will be an organisation that is transparent in what it does, which enables its members to have a real say in the work we do. - Our Management Committee will be enabled to provide leadership, challenge and direction. 	<p>How we will monitor our success</p> <p>Annual member's survey.</p> <p>Number of active volunteers.</p> <p>Staff indicators such as turnover and sickness absence rates.</p>