

A record of failure, a promise of more

How the Lib Dems have broken or failed to deliver on every single one of their 2018 manifesto pledges. Every. Single. One.

As of 8th February 2022, the Lib Dem manifesto for Sutton in 2018 can still be viewed [here](#). However, a copy has been retained by us should any attempt be made by the Lib Dems to remove it.

Below is a table of each and every one of the Lib Dem promises to the people of Sutton in 2018 and the reality of where they are with those pledges 4 years on.

It demonstrates a combination of broken promises, failure of delivery, attempts to take credit for things the Council has no control or influence over and was provided by others, or attempts to pass off things that have already been delivered or in the process of being delivered as new achievements.

These include things like:

- Failing to hold the incinerator operator to account, meaning the Beddington Farmlands are delayed and they are now looking to burn even more,
- Setting up an energy company, SDEN, only for it to fail spectacularly, leaving residents with cold homes and high bills,
- Presiding over a national scandal in SEN provision with shameful treatment of children and their families fighting for an education,
- Calling for cuts in our NHS, and attacked our local NHS' plan to use £500m to build a new hospital, protecting A&E and maternity,
- Having no plan to support local businesses or help our High Streets thrive, instead penalising them by increasing parking charges,
- Completing no new affordable housing project under the Council's own company as promised,
- ...and much more!

This list does not include the endless pile of failures by this Lib Dem-run Council over the past 4 years and beyond, including on things like low-traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs), parking permits, the incinerator, Sutton Bin Shame, nearly losing both of Sutton's theatres and much more.

The Lib Dems have shown they are just not fit to govern in Sutton. They are arrogant, out-of-touch and have run out of ideas.

In order to take Sutton forward together, with a positive plan for the future of our Borough, vote Conservative on Thursday 5th May 2022.

Sutton Lib Dem 2018 Manifesto Pledge	Reality	Score
Ambitious for the Environment - <i>“Become the top UK borough recycling”</i>	According to letsrecycle.com, the London Borough of Sutton ranked 118 th in the England league table of local authorities for percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling or composting. ¹	Fail
Ambitious for the Environment - <i>“Deliver a ground-breaking decentralised energy network.”</i>	<p>The Sutton Decentralised Energy Network (SDEN) has been one of the most shameful examples of Lib Dem incompetence. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Independent report finds it was founded on “false assumptions”, including funding grants that were never obtains and 75 homes that don’t exist, • 25 heating/hot water blackouts, • Two fire brigade callouts, • Above-average bills, • Fraud accusations, • Formal investigation into its business model. 	Fail
Ambitious for the Environment - <i>“Deliver one of the largest London Parkland areas in Beddington.”</i>	<p>Restoration plans have fallen way behind for Beddington Farmlands. Wildlife has collapsed and there is next to no public access to enjoy it.</p> <p>A petition, signed by over 6,500 people, was submitted to Sutton Council in October 2019, to enforce planning conditions and require Viridor to restore the site and deliver the nature reserve it promised. As a result of the campaign Viridor must report on progress every six months. Even the Lib Dems admit the delay themselves.²</p>	Fail

¹ <https://www.letsrecycle.com/councils/league-tables/2020-21-overall-performance-2/>

² https://www.suttonlibdems.org.uk/the_restoration_of_beddington_farmlands

<p>Ambitious for business – <i>“Deliver our Sutton Town Centre Masterplan”</i></p>	<p>In 2016, 45 sites were selected for redevelopment in the masterplan and 3,000 new homes built. So far, only nine developments, made up of 930 flats, have been completed. In August 2021, Sutton Council wasted £26 million to purchase the St Nicholas shopping centre without any plan on how to make this a profitable investment.</p> <p>In 2019, the council paid £5 million to purchase the former BHS department store to create their Sutton Works Project. The project is yet to be built, following concerns over awarding the design contract to an inexperienced firm.³</p> <p>The Conservative Government on the other hand has awarded more than £11m worth of funding to Sutton Council for the Future Hugh Street Fund.</p>	<p>Fail</p>
<p>Ambitious for business – <i>“Offer support packages for small business and entrepreneurs”</i></p>	<p>The Conservative Government granted local businesses in Sutton almost £76 million of support during the COVID-19 crisis (excluding furlough job retention scheme).⁴</p> <p>The Council on the other hand is making life harder for businesses, far from supporting them. Parking charges in town centre car parks and nearby residential roads continue to be raised or introduced, discouraging residents from shopping locally. Low Traffic Neighbourhood schemes have also cut footfall to some local businesses or rely on passing trade.</p> <p>Three LibDem councillors also libelled a local businessman and community sports club in one of their party leaflets, and were forced into an apology.⁵</p>	<p>Fail</p>
<p>Ambitious for business – <i>“Ensure a skilled local workforce of potential employees”</i></p>	<p>Sutton Skills Match ran from 2013-16 and doesn’t seem to have been renewed.⁶</p> <p>The Council sign-post the Conservative Government’s skills toolkit.⁷</p> <p>No specific evidence of work from Sutton Council to ensure local workforce develop skills.</p>	<p>Unclear</p>
<p>Ambitious for business – <i>“Develop</i></p>	<p>Sutton Council sign-post apprenticeships elsewhere and advertise their own apprenticeship at the council. However, no evidence of Sutton Council developing schemes specifically linked to local businesses.</p>	<p>Unclear</p>

³ <https://www.mylondon.news/news/south-london-news/sutton-council-defends-choosing-inexperienced-20454237>

⁴ <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8938/>

⁵ <https://insidecroydon.com/2021/05/14/caught-short-incompetent-licensing-chair-told-to-resign/>

⁶ <https://www.opportunitysutton.org/employment-and-skills/>

⁷ <https://www.opportunitysutton.org/covid-19-distance-learning/>

<p><i>apprenticeship schemes specifically linked to local businesses.”</i></p>		
<p>Ambitious for our young people – <i>“Increase mental health support for young people with special focus on tackling self-harming and depression in secondary school students”</i></p>	<p>A number of actions have been conducted through the Sutton LSCP, including: establishing a self-harm protocol, creating a young women’s group to discuss mental health issues, a Young People’s Mental Health and Wellbeing Survey Report in January 2019.</p> <p>Mental health services sign-posted on Sutton Council’s website, but unclear what role, if any, the Council has had in any of these services.⁸</p> <p>Sutton Council supported some events for World Mental Health Day.⁹</p> <p>However, Sutton Council has totally failed SEND children as it refused extra support for hundreds of vulnerable children. This made national headlines after it appeared in a BBC Panorama episode.¹⁰ The Council’s treatment of children with SEND and their families has been nothing short of shameful.</p>	<p>Fail</p>
<p>Ambitious for young people – <i>“Link our new school in Belmont with the Institute of Cancer Research for great career</i></p>	<p>Whilst the new Harris Academy has opened,¹¹ there is no specific information on how this links up with career/training opportunities.</p>	<p>Unclear</p>

⁸ https://www.sutton.gov.uk/info/200588/health_and_wellbeing/2240/mental_health_support/5

⁹ https://www.sutton.gov.uk/news/article/895/world_mental_health_day?fbclid=IwAR25Keuy5KfEdK55vMHdJlBmFbTB8kpkTx8WrTpumyXbwvD11jv0ulrrs

¹⁰ <https://www.yourlocalguardian.co.uk/news/18703764.sutton-mum-represents-devastated-parents-bbc-panorama/>

¹¹ https://www.sutton.gov.uk/news/article/442/sutton_council_unveils_new_ultra-low_energy_harris_academy_in_belmont

<i>and training opportunities”</i>		
<i>Ambitious for young people – “Encourage a University Campus in the borough with the support of the ICR”</i>	The ICR have a campus at the Cancer Hub with a lecture theatre, study rooms, etc, however, the ICR has existed in Sutton long before 2018 and teamed up with the University of London to provide postgraduate degrees as far back as 2003. ¹²	Unclear
<i>Building a better Sutton – “Use our council-owned company to deliver more affordable homes”</i>	<p>The Council’s own housing company, Sutton Living Ltd, has not completed ANY housing projects, and whether or not they would be ‘affordable’ once completed is debatable.</p> <p>SHP housing stock has increased from 5,868 in April 2018 to 6,025 in April 2021.^{13 14}</p> <p>It is also worth mentioning that the Lib Dems sat on Victoria House for years before it was finally demolished to make way for new housing, failing to deliver on election promises in MANY elections that they would demolish it.</p>	Fail
<i>Building a better Sutton – “Deliver our town centre Heritage Action Zone enhancing and protecting our</i>	<p>Sutton Council launched the Heritage Action Zone in October 2018 with an assessment and a report of the listed buildings. A consultation on the Sutton Town Centre Conservation Area was conducted in late 2019, followed by a formal adoption.</p> <p>Specifics on this area (the enhancement and the protection of listed buildings) is unclear. However, they have a proven record of messing up projects like the Lodge.¹⁵</p> <p>Sutton Council are happy to allow for lorries to park in front of the Battle of Britain monument during the construction of Sheen Way school.¹⁶</p>	Unclear

¹² <https://www.icr.ac.uk/studying-and-training/postgraduate-life/sites-and-facilities>

¹³ <https://modern.gov.sutton.gov.uk/documents/s61499/Housing%20Revenue%20Account%20Business%20Plan%20201819%20to%20204748.pdf>

¹⁴ [file:///C:/Users/prestonlm/Downloads/HRA Business Plan 2022 23 to 2051 52 final for publication%20\(1\).pdf](file:///C:/Users/prestonlm/Downloads/HRA Business Plan 2022 23 to 2051 52 final for publication%20(1).pdf)

¹⁵ <https://www.facebook.com/391753941395158/posts/868943253676222/>

¹⁶ https://insidecroaydon.com/2022/01/24/council-wants-to-turn-battle-of-britain-memorial-into-lorry-park/?fbclid=IwAR1Zf5q5ePxsWUE--c9dyLodLUslWY5dPihLp5e_127gWuSsucCZQwOunMc

<i>listed buildings”</i>	Despite a large number of Historic England “heritage at risk” sites, there seems to no tangible action to protect and restore these sites. ¹⁷	
Building a better Sutton – “Attract new businesses to the borough”	<p>The number of businesses in the borough has technically increased since 2018 from 8,290 to 8,620. However, as a whole, Sutton Council has a poor track record in attracting businesses,¹⁸ and many shopping units across the Borough still sit empty.</p> <p>In August 2021, Sutton Council wasted £26 million to purchase the St Nicholas shopping centre without any plan on how to make this a profitable investment or attract more businesses to the area. Some speculate that the site will be turned into housing.</p> <p>Meanwhile, the Conservative Government has awarded more than £11m worth of funding to Sutton Council for the Future High Street Fund.</p>	Unclear
Building a better Sutton – “Improve the Sutton High Street offer with new markets, improved facilities and exciting temporary arts and events.”	<p>Sutton high Street is plagued with empty shops and poor facilities.</p> <p>In 2016, 45 sites were selected for redevelopment in the masterplan and 3,000 new homes built. Since then, little has been achieved.</p> <p>So far, only nine developments, made up of 930 flats, have been completed. In August 2021, Sutton Council wasted £26 million to purchase the St Nicholas shopping centre without any plan on how to make this a profitable investment or attract more businesses to the area. Some speculate that the site will be turned into housing.</p> <p>In 2019, the council paid £5 million to purchase the former BHS department store to create their Sutton Works Project. The project is yet to be built, following concerns over awarding the design contract to an inexperienced firm.¹⁹</p> <p>The Conservative Government has awarded more than £11m worth of funding to Sutton Council for the Future High Street Fund.</p>	Fail

¹⁷ <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/results/?advsearch=1&par=Carshalton%20and%20Wallington&searchtype=harsearch>

¹⁸ <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/SN06152/SN06152.pdf>

¹⁹ <https://www.mylondon.news/news/south-london-news/sutton-council-defends-choosing-inexperienced-20454237>

<p>Building a better Sutton – <i>“Deliver an Area Renewal scheme for Rosehill in St Helier”</i></p>	<p>Engagement with key stakeholders has taken place and plans drawn up. However, four years later, nothing tangible has been delivered:²⁰</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some residents have also complained that the painting of the toilet at the open space look cheap. • Sutton Lib Dems campaigned against the proposed new school at Rosehill. • Despite the former Conservative Mayor of London ringfencing funding for the tram extension to Rosehill, the Labour Mayor scrapped these plans and the Lib Dems failed to stop this from occurring. 	<p>Fail</p>
<p>Building a better Sutton – <i>“Deliver an Area Renewal scheme for Clockhouse”</i></p>	<p>A small amount of new social housing is planned for the area.²¹</p> <p>However, Clockhouse seems to have been largely ignored. Unlike with Rosehill, there is no visual plan for a renewal scheme for Clockhouse.</p> <p>In the Neighbourhood Fund Recommendation Report 2021, Clockhouse received zero funding for any of the proposed projects and has been excluded from the council’s proposals to plant a minimum of 25 trees per ward.</p>	<p>Fail</p>
<p>A borough of opportunity – <i>“Work to ensure all our young people are in education, work or training”</i></p>	<p>Sutton Lib Dems campaigned against the proposed new school at Rosehill. Despite a sudden rise in the local population due to the Hong Kong welcome programme, the extra school place provision that this will generate was not calculated into the decision to reject the new school. The Lib Dems are failing the school children of the future in Sutton.</p>	<p>Fail</p>

²⁰ <https://moderngov.sutton.gov.uk/documents/s73428/20210107%20-%20Rosehill%20Area%20Renewal%20Presentation.pdf>

²¹ <https://moderngov.sutton.gov.uk/documents/s70131/Appendix%20A%20-%20Ambitious%20for%20Sutton%20Plan%202020-22%2010022020%20Strategy%20and%20Resources%20Committee.pdf>

A borough of opportunity – <i>“Develop a Young Entrepreneurs Scheme”</i>	We cannot find any evidence of this existing.	Unclear
A borough of opportunity – <i>“Offer our older residents more opportunities to keep active and health”</i>	<p>In January 2020 Sutton became the 40th member, not the first as they advertised, to join the UK network of Age Friendly Communities.²² As part of the Sutton Plan, the council are still developing plans to actually implement this programme, so the ‘offer’ spoken about in the manifesto is still yet to manifest itself.</p> <p>The council’s Move More initiative sign-posts ways in which people can get involved with healthy activities.²³</p> <p>Carshalton Beeches railways station still does not have full step-free access.</p>	Unclear

²² <https://www.local.gov.uk/case-studies/sutton-our-plan-create-age-friendly-borough>

²³ https://www.sutton.gov.uk/homepage/1167/move_more


<p>A borough of opportunity – <i>“Deliver more employment opportunities and apprenticeships by attracting new businesses into the borough”</i></p>	<p>See business attraction section above.</p> <p>Apprenticeship starts in the London Borough of Sutton fell from 1,170 in 2018 to 440 in 2021.²⁴</p>	<p>Unclear</p>
<p>A borough of opportunity – <i>“Provide more apprenticeship places for young people leaving foster care or residential care”</i></p>	<p>Apprenticeship starts in the London Borough of Sutton fell from 1,170 in 2018 to 440 in 2021.²⁵</p> <p>Whilst Cognus and Sutton Council sign-post potential apprenticeship opportunities, we cannot locate evidence to suggest that the council has provided more apprenticeship places for young people leaving foster or residential care.</p>	<p>Fail</p>

²⁴ <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn06113/>

²⁵ <https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn06113/>

<p>A borough of opportunity – <i>“Become the first borough recognised as an Age-Friendly borough by Age UK”</i></p>	<p>In January 2020 Sutton became the 40th member to join the UK network of Age Friendly Communities – not the first.²⁶</p>	<p>Fail</p>
<p>A better environment for all: <i>“Campaign for improved public transport, especially to help develop the London Cancer Hub”</i></p>	<p>Sutton Council has failed on a number of public transport issues:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sutton remains the lowest-funded TfL borough in London • Sutton does not have any tube, overground, Crossrail and only two tram stops • The Tram extension plans that were developed under Boris Johnson’s leadership as Mayor of London have been thrown out, with no evidence that the Lib Dems tried to stop it • The plans to unblock the Croydon Bottleneck (which would unlock capacity on the rail lines) have been delayed, with no evidence we can find that the Lib Dems are campaigning for it • Sutton Council messed up their levelling up fund application and failed to win funding for the Belmont Loop. • Despite local Conservatives saving the Go Sutton Bus (on demand bus service) in early 2020, the Lib Dems failed to fight for the service going forward the programme has been scrapped by the Labour Mayor of London • Sutton Council continues to ignore accessibility issues at Carshalton Beeches station* <p>*please note, that Sutton Council are not directly responsible for some of these points but have failed to campaign successfully for them.</p>	<p>Fail</p>

²⁶ <https://www.local.gov.uk/case-studies/sutton-our-plan-create-age-friendly-borough>

<p>A better environment for all – <i>“Deliver a borough electric bike scheme”</i></p>	<p>50 Lime bikes were introduced to the borough in 2019. Their introduction wasn’t managed adequately, and they were a failure.</p> <p>As of now, no Lime bikes exist in Sutton.</p> 	<p>Fail</p>
<p>A better environment for all – <i>“Support tree-planting schemes with the aim of achieving over 2,000 new trees across the borough”</i></p>	<p>There is no evidence available online to verify whether this target has been reached.</p> <p>Any trees planted would also have to be offset against the number of trees lost to development, storm damage or otherwise removed.</p>	<p>Unclear</p>

<p>A better environment for all – <i>“Increase the amount and range of activities in our parks”</i></p>	<p>Unable to quantify and confirm accurately due to the COVID-19 restrictions, scattered information and blurred definition of “activities”.</p> <p>As part of the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy Action Plan 2020-2025, a number of targets appear to have been missed or there is missing information online to confirm. By the end of Q4 of 2021, the council was to prepare a Playing Pitch Strategy and an action plan to improve sports facilities. There is no evidence of these existing online.²⁷</p>	<p>Unclear</p>
<p>A better environment for all – <i>“Protect and renovate our historic buildings”</i></p>	<p>Sutton Council has no plan for Carew Manor once the school has moved out of the site, and they have not ruled out selling it off.</p> <p>Sutton Council launched the Heritage Action Zone in October 2018 with an assessment and a report of the listed buildings. A consultation on the Sutton Town Centre Conservation Area was conducted in late 2019, followed by a formal adoption.</p> <p>Specifics on this area (the enhancement and the protection of listed buildings) are unclear. However, they have a proven record of messing up projects like the Lodge.²⁸</p> <p>Despite a large number of Historic England “heritage at risk” sites, there seems to no tangible action to protect and restore these sites.²⁹</p>	<p>Unclear</p>
<p>2014 pledges worth mentioning – <i>“Protecting St Helier”</i></p>	<p>The Lib Dems have consistently and aggressively opposed attempts to improve facilities at St Helier. This Conservative Government has successfully awarded £500 million to improve facilities and future-proof St Helier, and build a brand new acute care hospital in Sutton, protecting both A&E and maternity in Sutton, which shamefully the Lib Dems are trying to block. This plan is not a Government plan, but an NHS one. Conservatives trust our NHS to deliver better healthcare in our Borough. The Lib Dem approach would see St Helier close and Sutton having no hospital facilities at all.</p> <p>Lib Dem Council Leader has also called for cuts to the NHS budget.</p>	<p>Fail</p>

²⁷ <https://modern.gov.sutton.gov.uk/documents/s69205/7b%20POSS%20Action%20Plan%202020-2025.pdf>

²⁸ <https://www.facebook.com/391753941395158/posts/868943253676222/>

²⁹ <https://historicengland.org.uk/advice/heritage-at-risk/search-register/results/?advsearch=1&par=Carshalton%20and%20Wallington&searchtype=harsearch>

2014 pledges worth mentioning – <i>“Keeping crime levels low”</i>	Despite being a City Hall matter, the Lib Dems have failed to help tackle crime locally. For example, Sutton Council initially refused to fund the installation of barriers to deter anti-social behaviour on Roundshaw Down. Only after a mass campaign by local Conservative campaigners did the council recently u-turn and award funding for this project. ³⁰ The Lib Dems nationally have voted against tougher sentences for dangerous criminals, campaigned to block deportation of dangerous foreign national offenders and flirt with the legalisation of many drugs.	Fail
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³⁰ <https://modern.gov.sutton.gov.uk/documents/s70131/Appendix%20A%20-%20Ambitious%20for%20Sutton%20Plan%202020-22%2010022020%20Strategy%20and%20Resources%20Committee.pdf>