



**David Howarth MP**  
**Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for Energy**

Constituency: Cambridge  
Majority: 4339

A Cambridge law and economics don and former leader of the city council, David Howarth ousted the Labour MP Anne Campbell in 2005, reversing a Labour majority of more than 8,500 with a swing of nearly 15 per cent. This was help by widespread sentiment within the constituency against the war in Iraq and tuition fees. It was his third attempt to win the seat, and quickly earned him a front-bench post as an assistant spokesman for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

He said the deposition of Charles Kennedy was “a great shame” and wrote an article critical of Sir Menzies Campbell, the early favourite to succeed him. He was an early supporter of Chris Huhne. But Campbell kept him on the front bench, moving him to the team shadowing the Department of Trade and Industry.

Born and brought up on a council estate in Walsall in 1958, son of a maintenance engineer, he went to Queen Mary’s grammar school and took first class honours in law at Clare College, Cambridge. He went on to do postgraduate degrees in law and sociology at Yale University.

He joined the Liberal Party in his teens, starting his political activism with petitions against his local council. Interested in ideas such as industrial democracy in the strike-ridden 1970s, he was active in student politics, an executive of the students’ union. At Yale he worked for the Democrat Walter Mondale in the 1984 presidential election.

He returned to Cambridge as a Fellow of his old college, and tutor in law and economics. He has published many academic articles and in 1995 won the Butterworth’s prize for the best new legal textbook. He remains a university Reader in Law, and recent publications include papers on the legal implications of genetically modified farming.

He served on the party’s federal policy committee for 11 years. He chaired the economic policy working group and was a member of the European Lib-Dem council.

He was elected to Cambridge City Council in 1987, and served for 17 years. He led the Liberal Democrat group through the 1990s, became leader of the council when his party took control in 2000, but stood down in 2004.

He first contested the parliamentary seat in 1992, when Labour narrowly won it from the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrat vote was squeezed. He sat out the 1997 election, but in 2001 he achieved an 8.6 per cent swing against Campbell and overtook the Conservative to move into second place.

He campaigned against Labour's plans for ID cards, the Iraq war, student fees and environmental and transport issues. In his maiden speech he highlighted the need for more affordable housing and transport infrastructure, and questioned the orthodoxy of protecting the "green belt" in all cases.

Though enjoying a majority of 4,339, he pointed out that one of his predecessors as an opposition MP, had been elected by just one vote – Oliver Cromwell in 1640. He was appointed to the Constitutional Affairs and Environmental Audit committees, and is vice-chairman of the All-Party University Group.

One of the most liberal of Liberal Democrats, he wants the party to be "both economically and socially liberal". He was highly concerned by the law-changing powers proposed for ministers in the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Bill. He voted against the prohibition of smoking in all pubs and private clubs.

He called for the abolition of Cambridgeshire County Council and the creation of a unitary authority for the city.

He is a member of Friends of the Earth and a supporter of Amnesty International. He is married with two sons and likes football and opera.

#### Recent Voting Record:

- Racial and religious hatred (intent) - 31.1.2006  
Government voted FOR a motion to oppose Lords amendment that only threatening behaviour should be criminalised. Opposition and Labour rebels voted AGAINST  
*Against*
- Racial hatred (intent) - 31.1.2006  
Government voted FOR motion to dismiss amendment saying only threatening behaviour should be criminalised. Opposition and Labour rebels voted AGAINST.  
*No vote*
- Racial and religious hatred - 31.1.2006  
Lords amendment favoured existing law. Government MPs voted FOR a motion to oppose the Lords, others AGAINST.

*Against*

- Terrorism bill - 9.11.2005

MPs voted on a government proposal to extend the maximum period for police detention of a terrorist suspect without charge to 90 days. The government was defeated, with 49 Labour MPs rebelling.

*Against*

- Terror bill 'intent' amendment - 2.11.2005

An amendment to the government's terror bill. Opposition and rebel MPs voted for the amendment.

*For*

- ID cards bill (3rd reading) - 18.10.2005

A government bill to introduce identity cards. 25 Labour MPs opposed the bill's third reading, and others voted for opposition amendments.

*Against*

- ID cards bill (second reading) - 28.6.2005

MPs voted to give the ID cards bill a second reading, 20 Labour rebels voted against the government.

*No vote*