



# Securing Britain's Future

Liberal Democrat manifesto, 2014



This election has been called for one very specific reason: the Conservative party's inability to negotiate. With its past two leaders the Conservative party has gone from a party committed to sensible Government to a party driven by cynicism and paranoia. It has been the Liberal Democrats over the past four years that has provided the leadership our country has needed and in this manifesto we will present a bold and radical vision for our country, a vision that seeks to tackle the burning injustices we face as a nation.

Entering Government for the first time in almost a century, Liberal Democrats have had to make difficult decisions to right the course of the country to prevent us from slipping into further economic uncertainty. I fully accept the pain that some of those decisions have had on many people up and down this country, they weigh heavy on my heart, but I am resolved to continue the fight I have made my life's work to tackle the problems our country faces and present sensible, evidence-based policy that is in the interest of the British people. The Liberal Democrats have a long path to take to regain the trust that we have lost, but I am confident in our abilities to continue delivering for the British people.



This election will be seen as a straight play for the top job, with the option of Labour or Conservative, but that same old option has become stale for millions of you and over the last four years we have demonstrated what Liberal Democrats can achieve in Government: an increase in your personal income tax allowance meaning you keep more of your own money, passing same-sex marriage giving everyone the same right to marry, introducing a pupil premium that has invested money into our schools and pupils, a pension triple lock ensuring retirement security for all, a real commitment to renewable and clean energy that has revolutionised our energy industry. It has been our leadership, pursuing liberal policies that has brought about real change in our country.

Despite these advances I still look at the country today and know that we can achieve so much more, that greatness is within our grasp but we need only reach out and grasp it. As a nation we have a long history of free-thinkers, entrepreneurs, industrial leaders, inventors and charitable people, but that possibility is not being tapped into, that possibility is being squandered by both the Conservatives and the Labour party, where we are simply placed into a box and are expected to stay there until we die. When I think about our country, I think of an outward-looking, inclusive place to live where if you put in hard work you can succeed, but too often that is not the case.

We have an education system that has fallen behind, where the gap between students from the richest and poorest families is wide, where opportunities for training and education are few and far between, where access to an affordable and secure home is too often only a dream for young people, where our political system is broken, where the richest strive and the poorest just have to make do. That is not the Britain we want, nor is the Britain we deserve. We deserve a Britain that is bold and ambitious about its future, a future that is open, optimistic and fair.

Our country deserves that future and in this manifesto we set out our vision for that future, where we propose new policy aimed at targeting the problems our society faces and tackles them head on, with funding, new legislation and strong commitments.

When it comes to election day we are counting on your support to keep this fight going, to keep Britain looking forward not backwards, to secure Britain's future. Join us and vote Liberal Democrat.

*Meredith H-C*

**Meredith Hansen-Charles**, Leader of the Liberal Democrats

## **CHAPTER 1. FIXING A BROKEN SYSTEM.**

### **1.1 Better Politics**

Our politics is broken. Our politics is overcentralised and unrepresentative with a complete lack of transparency and openness. Our Parliament is unrepresentative of the British electorate, we have an unelected House of Lords, and local government is dictated to by central government. It is no wonder why so many people feel anger at the political class when they feel they have no effective way of making their concerns and priorities known.

The Liberal Democrats have always been passionate supporters of fixing our broken political system, and despite attempts blocked by the Conservative in Parliament, we remain committed to these goals. Not only have attempts to reform our politics been waylaid, but we have seen the true ugly side of British politics recently with leaks, cover ups and botched investigations from the Conservatives. This deception from the Conservative party was unacceptable for us and they left us no choice but end the coalition.

In order to make our politics more representative and open the Liberal Democrats propose:

- Reform of how we elect MPs to the House of Commons via the Single Transferable Vote method, that will ensure that no vote cast is wasted and the practice of safe seats is eliminated.
- Introduce Single Transferable Vote to all local government elections.
- Pass House of Lords reform agreed on a cross-party basis, once supported by the Prime Minister now forgotten to appease his backbenchers.
- Pass legislation giving the vote to 16 and 17 year olds.
- Remove big money from politics by capping donations at £10,000 per person per year.
- Strengthen political freedoms of trade union members by letting them choose which political party they wish to support through the political levy.
- Create a Register of Lobbyists, providing the public with open and freely accessible information of who is meeting with and being influenced by.
- Establish separate overseas constituencies for British citizens living abroad, and ensure British citizens never lose their voting rights.

### **1.2 A decentralised United Kingdom**

Liberal Democrats are proud of the role devolution has played in the UK, and the positive effect it has had on the people in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Continuing and supporting the devolved authorities by enhancing their powers and responsibilities.

In Scotland, we are approaching an independence referendum that will change the course of Scotland forever. It is the firm belief of the Liberal Democrats that Scotland is stronger within the United Kingdom, that together we can achieve greater things, that Scotland is wanted and needed in the union. We believe this as equally when it comes to Wales, that the contribution of Wales and Scotland to the union should always be recognised and supported. The Liberal Democrats will:

- Extend powers over income tax to both The Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales.
- Implement remaining aspects of the Silk Commission, and raise the Assembly to the level of a Parliament, and implement a new Commission on future powers for The Scottish Parliament.
- Establish a Commission on the implementation of a codified British Constitution.
- Encourage greater devolution of powers away from Parliament to devolved legislatures where the need arises.
- Continue to support a safe and secure Northern Ireland, with a stable Northern Ireland Assembly and NI Executive.
- Ensure strong links between the NI Executive, UK Government and Irish Government to always support the Good Friday Agreement and security in Northern Ireland.
- Consult on where powers can be transferred from Parliament to local authorities to take decision making closer to the people.
- Introduce 'Devolution on Demand' for areas of the country that wish to pursue devolution, for example a Yorkshire Parliament or Cornish Assembly.

### **1.3 Local communities working together**

Liberal Democrats believe in community politics, where decisions are taken as close to the people as possible and where people are empowered to make decisions for themselves and their communities. We will:

- Drastically reduce the powers of central government ministers to interfere in democratically elected local governments.
- Aim to increase the number of community, parish and neighbourhood councils and promote tenant management in social housing.
- Establish a commission on devolving greater financial responsibility to local governments, building on the Commission for Local Government Finance.
- Encourage Social Value as an integral aspect of Local Government procurement and delivery of services.

- Protect High Streets and local communities by empowering local authorities to cap the number of betting shops and capping the maximum amount able to be bet at fixed odds betting terminals.

## CHAPTER 2. BALANCING THE BUDGET FAIRLY

It is not fair for a government to work up unsustainable debts, for an ever growing share of tax revenue to be swallowed up by interest repayments on the debt instead of providing essential public services, for difficult choices to one day be forced upon a future set of taxpayers and citizens.

Neither, however, is it fair for a government to balance the books on the backs of the most vulnerable, to compromise the long-term hopes and ambitions - and indeed lives - of those who need the government safety net and society's support the most, when fairer ways of deficit control are available.

The Liberal Democrats will abide by two fiscal rules in government. These rules will put our fiscal health back on track, with room to spare, and allow us to continue investing in our future. It charts a smart fiscal course between the history of fiscal recklessness of Labour and the dogmatic and callous approach of the Tories.

1. Firstly, we will run a cyclically adjusted current budget from 2016-17.

**We will no longer be borrowing for day to day spending**, proving to the world that the fundamentals of our economy are strong and the government is being run in a sustainable and efficient way, allowing the fiscal credibility and endurance of our government to be rebuilt.

However, **we will still be able to borrow to invest in our country's future with capital spending and public corporations**. These efforts are recognised by economists and international creditors alike as being not just permissible, but often necessary for sound economic policy. Borrowing to invest is often vital, for both businesses and societies. In our first two years in office, reductions in the current budget will be used for capital investment - **increasing our long-term ability to maintain a strong fiscal and economic position and allow us to address societal and environmental challenges that cannot wait**.

Conservatives often insisted on treating capital spending as legitimate targets for deficit reduction - that was in fact one of the main differences in economic policy that ultimately reached breaking point - but this was the very definition of penny-wise, pound-foolish. It reduced the potential for long-term economic investment that ultimately bolsters the foundations and productive capacities of our economy.

Once the current budget is in surplus, we will grow it in line with economic growth.

2. From 2016-17, we will ensure debt falls as a share of our GDP year upon year.

It is important that we begin bringing debt down. This ensures our country has the fiscal flexibility to respond to future crises, whatever form they take, and that we do not leave future generations with the curse of having to make far tougher and far more difficult choices later down the line.

That is why, from 2016-17, we will ensure that our total debt as a share of GDP goes down year on year. This will, in the medium to long term, deliver a far more sustainable fiscal future for our nation, without the pain that the ideologically motivated approach from the Conservatives would entail. Once we begin bringing the debt down as a share of GDP, we will aim to use some of the saved money to further invest in capital spending.

## **2.1 A fair tax system**

We will raise the personal allowance to £10,000 in our first year in government, which will cost approximately £3 billion. We will raise it to £12,500 by the end of Parliament, costing approximately £12 billion. This is a big figure, but it will be more than paid for by the rest of our plan on tax and spending.

This ensures every job pays more, that every family gets more out of work, and that every household will benefit from hundreds more pounds of tax freedom. This will provide extra incentive to work and save, bring hundreds of thousands of more workers out of income tax altogether, and be an invaluable boon to lower and middle income families and those starting their professional development.

While the personal allowance - a Liberal Democrat achievement in government that the Conservatives bargained against and obstructed until finally relenting - is the centrepiece of our tax relief strategy, we will take many other steps to make the tax system fair and conducive to innovation and prosperity.

- We will work to repeal VAT on sanitary products - and in the first year of government unveil a program for free sanitary products in schools and hospitals to help eliminate period poverty, for which £50 million shall be appropriated.
- Replace business rates with a land value tax.
- Pursue a tax-free childcare agenda.
- Increase tax support for small businesses, housebuilding, and green energy.

For a tax system to be fair, all must pay their share and all must contribute to the services and infrastructure provided by government and the stability and security that we all rely upon. This is why the Liberal Democrats will make sure the burden of deficit reduction does not threaten the integrity of our public services and does not break the backs of those who are most vulnerable. We need to reallocate the tax burden, so those who benefit the most from society and can afford to pay the most do so.



- We will take further measures to fight tax evasion. We estimate these measures can raise approximately £5 billion per year.
  - The creation of a blanket “anti-avoidance” rule, allowing the HMRC to begin investigations against those using tricks not anticipated by existing legislation or rules to reduce their tax obligations.
  - More international cooperation on fighting tax havens.
  - Investing at least an extra billion in HMRC new technology and resources and setting them a legally binding target to reduce the tax gap.
  - Using the same structure in the Bribery Act 2010, establishing a criminal offence for commercial organisations who fail to prevent other financial crimes being implemented on their behalf.
  - Ensuring properties cannot avoid stamp duty by being purchased through or placed into an offshore trust, raising £750 million per year.
- We will implement a 1% Mansion Tax on properties worth over £2 million, paid on the value of property above that level, raising £1,960 million per year.
- To raise revenue and discourage high-value empty houses being kept empty, we will implement an Annual Tax on Enveloped Dwellings on all high-value dwellings owned by a company, a partnership in which one partner is a company, or a collective investment scheme, to raise £100 million per year, and a 3% SDLT surcharge on second homes will be imposed, to raise £150 million per year.
- Taxing capital gains at the same rate as income, ensuring all earning sources are treated the same way, raising £2,200 million per year.
- We will restrict pension tax relief to the basic rate, ensuring everyone gets the same tax relief on their pension earnings and raising £6,250 million per year.
- Overseas individuals and corporations will have to pay the equivalent taxes as British residents and firms do on commercial property sales, raising £5 to £8 billion per year.

**These measures, closing loopholes and striving for fairness in our tax code, will raise at least a total of £20,660 million per year - possibly up to £23.6 billion.** The focus here is on creating a tax code that raises sufficient revenue to ensure a fair country and effective investment in our future, while at the same time understanding that tax increases, at the margins, can put off investment decisions and can represent real strains on a family's finances or a business's bottom line. We sought to spread out the impact of any tax increases here, avoiding the blunt and heavy-handed approach of Labour, while trying to equalise the rules and ensure fairness wherever possible.

**We will also place a penny on the pound in income tax to fund NHS and social care. This will give our struggling health service a much-needed £6 billion cash injection, taking the strain off budgets, allowing much-needed investment, and ensuring social care and public health do not get left behind.**

Further sources of revenue can be derived from other policies laid out in this manifesto. Creating a legal, regulated market for cannabis, seizing control from criminal gangs and taking dangerous varieties off our streets, will allow for tax revenues of a further **£1 billion** - at least.

Speaking of green taxes, pollution and environmental degradation carries outrageous social and moral costs, not least climate change, costs that often are not incorporated within business decisions. By internalising the costs of pollution, green taxes can be an effective part of our efforts to both preserve a pristine environment for future generations and fairly redistribute power and privilege.

- We will replace the existing system, of per-passenger Air Passenger Duty with a per-plane duty (PPD), taxing air freight for the first time and ending a loophole, raising £3,500 million per year.
- An additional surcharge on domestic - and close international - flights will be introduced if realistic and greener transport alternatives are available. This will raise approximately £300 million per year.
- While certain fossil fuel industries require a different tax structure than other businesses, some of these tax frameworks amount to unwarranted subsidies that distort the energy market in favour of fossil fuels and should, at the very least, be reconsidered. This will not affect the rules that maintain the fundamental viability of profitable oil and gas operations by calculating how the tax expenditures that all businesses are eligible for apply to the sector, nor will it affect programs that help provide cheaper fuel for farmers and lower income households.
  - While the field allowance rule brings marginal fields into operation and thus eliminating it completely may pose a net fiscal loss, a reduction of approximately half will save the taxpayer £200 million.
  - The ring fence expenditure supplement will be eliminated, saving approximately £60 million.
  - The oil allowance will be eliminated, saving approximately £100 million per year.
  - The tariff receipts allowance will be eliminated, saving £31 million per year.
- We will introduce a one-time increase in the landfill tax of 5%, bringing in an extra £50 million in the first year. We will introduce a similar increase on the aggregates levy, raising £16 million in the first year. These steps will bolster our efforts to encourage reuse, recycling, and the circular economy part of our industrial strategy.

- We will introduce a one-time increase in the Climate Change Levy of 5%, bringing in an extra £55 million in the first year and supporting our efforts to increase investment in energy efficiency and bring down carbon emissions.

Combined, these measures to make our tax code more environmentally friendly and reduce distortions and inequities that favour environmentally harmful fossil fuels will save £4,312 million per year.

The Liberal Democrat tax plan, then, will raise over £30 billion at least.

We will also consider fundamental replacements of our tax code, towards a land value and green tax-focused model, one that is far more supportive of equity and efficiency. This is an old liberal tradition, and it is one we are happy to see gaining increased momentum today.

## **2.2 Efficient and Responsible Spending**

Ensuring efficient public spending is of interest to everyone. We all benefit from a government that makes prudent investments, that makes smart and ethical choices in procurement and contracting, that doesn't necessarily run up debt or place undue pressure on the public purse. We still believe that much work needs to be done - in terms of culture - in making sure Whitehall spends your money wisely. The Liberal Democrats - a party defined by an evidence-based approach to policy-making and a rejection of the political status quo - are uniquely placed to make an invaluable contribution to this debate.

- We are committed to continue the program of quango abolitions, efficiency savings, administrative savings and the removal of duplicative programs and unfair subsidies that we started under the coalition. We believe that continuing with coalition efficiency reforms can make considerable progress towards a 5% cut across the board in all but ring-fenced budgets. Beyond this, savings will be used for future investments within the department.
- We will conduct a full spending review, but with a renewed focus on the operations and style of government – including of all fees and services, of contract reform, of digitisation, of procurement, of investing to save and promoting energy efficiency, and of future commercialisation options. We need to be leaders in innovating to run efficient government - and this will be a priority for capital investment.
- There is about £20 billion in public sector fraud and £25 billion in inefficient procurement and poor use of outsourcing. The government can't eliminate waste or fraud, but it can certainly do far more to tackle it.

By directing these cuts - and pledging now not to pursue them in departments that, after the spending review, already run at peak efficiency - we will protect frontline services while still delivering an efficient and effective government. We anticipate saving £12 and £18 billion per year. We will not cut frontline services to reach these targets.

We have also identified other savings we can begin to roll out immediately, savings that emanate from our liberal principles. These savings all contribute towards the vision of a government that gives individuals the freedom and opportunity to flourish, safe in the knowledge that their government has provided a stable foundation and safety net.

- Promoting prevention and taking seriously public health crises such as air quality and mental health will deliver considerable economic benefits and reduce the strain on our NHS. We believe £800 million is a reasonable goal for savings in this area by the end of parliament.
- Protecting civil liberties by scaling back metadata collection, limiting asylum detention to 28 days, abolishing Police and Crime Commissioners and vetoing a “Snooper’s Charter” and similar efforts. These measures will save approximately £450 million per year.
- Reforming short prison sentences, and eliminating the costs from an aggressive and counterproductive War on Drugs, saving at least £800 million per year by the end of Parliament.
- Increasing the supply of housing will lead to increases in economic activity and reductions in the housing benefit bill, which we believe can save £500 million per year.
- We want to improve and tighten the means-testing of income-related benefits, reducing the share of the benefits bill that goes to the top twenty percent of households, with an aim of saving £500 million per year.

These ideas will deliver a fair and liberal government in line with the values and principles of the British people, savings that go along with improving our nation rather than being sacrifices. We aim to deliver £3,050 million in savings, at a minimum, with these policies.

As such, we will raise £31,972 million in revenue and save at least £15,050 in spending. This will more than cover the spending and tax cut programmes contained within this manifesto.

## CHAPTER 3. PROTECTING OUR PUBLIC SERVICES.

### 3.1 Putting children first

Liberal Democrats have always placed education at the heart of our agenda and over the course of the Coalition Government we have made sure that education has been one of the priorities of Government. With our leadership the Pupil Premium was introduced and now we are investing directly into schools to benefit the most disadvantaged students, prioritised funding for early years education and protected spending on our Schools Building Programme. Liberal Democrats fundamentally believe that education is the great equaliser and that given the opportunities and the skills every child has the potential to achieve greatness. We believe every child deserves a great start in life so they are equipped to shape their own future, and we are determined to make sure that the education system is designed to unleash the full potential of our nation's children.

Over the past four years we have contributed and led the charge on education policy that has made great strides in delivering a world class education system, but we are acutely aware of the work still needed to be done to give every children the chance they deserve to fulfil their dreams. The gap between children from the wealthiest and poorest backgrounds is a critical problem that we must tackle, where children from the poorest 10% of families in the United Kingdom too often fall behind their peers and never catch up, where children are leaving primary school years behind in reading and writing skills, where children are too intensely pushed to achieve good test scores instead of expanding their horizons. Liberal Democrats believe that we can deliver the change needed.

We have taken steps forward to tackle the gap between children from the richest and poorest families, such as the introduction of the Pupil Premium, but we think we can go further. That is why **we will increase the pupil premium to £3 billion in the first year of the next Parliament and increase it to £5 billion by the end of the next five year Parliament.** The Pupil Premium has been a massive success by investing money directly into schools to provide more money for disadvantaged students. **The Early Years Pupil Premium will also be expanded to provide £1000 per pupil per year.**

Getting children and families ready to learn is a key aspect to a successful education system. Parents and children are under huge pressure to succeed, but there is often little support. The Liberal Democrats believe that parents need to be empowered and supported to raise the next generation. As a first priority we will **extend Free School Meals to all primary school aged children and encourage the creation of breakfast clubs** ensuring that children have nutritious and healthy meals during the day so they

are prepared and ready to learn. **We will ensure all teaching staff have the training to identify mental health problems, that schools provide counselling services and that the promotion of healthy wellbeing is a statutory responsibility of schools.**

In order to deliver the education system we all want we need to ensure that our children have the teachers and teaching staff that they deserve. Our teachers are some of the best in the world, and over the past four years we have asked them to make sacrifices but now our economy is in a stronger position **we will end the 1% pay cap on salaries.** We want to free teachers from endless paperwork and overburdened workloads in order to enable them to do what they trained to do: teach. We will do this by establishing an independent Education Standards Authority to pilot, phase in and resource future policy changes in partnership with professionals and experts. We will also **reform Ofsted inspections so that they focus on longer-term outcomes and continued improvement,** not short-term goals that do not accurately examine a school's performance. Alongside this **we will introduce a new, independent Foundation for Leadership in Education to promote high-quality, evidence-based leadership and provide the leaders our schools need.**

In 2010, our schools were in a state of disrepair. Buildings were falling apart, children were crammed into rooms with crumbling walls or pre-fab buildings not designed for long term use. If we are to build an education system fit for all our students we have to the infrastructure in place for it to be built upon.

We will:

- Expand the Priority Schools Building Programme to ensure we are providing the funds our schools need to complete repairs and that new schools are built to last.
- Oppose any proposal to expand Grammar Schools and demand that money set aside for that expansion be transferred to local authorities for school improvements.
- End the policy of forced academisation for schools in England, but instead ensure that local councils are properly equipped to tackle failing school standards.
- Devolve responsibility to local councils to put in place clear school places planning and end the rule that all new state schools must be either free schools or academies.
- To ensure fairness across all education institutions Ofsted inspections will be extended to include local authority and Academy chains.
- Rule out state-funded profit-making schools and put in new rules to ensure new schools are built in areas of need, instead of wasting money on oversupply.
- Ensure world-class and comprehensive Sex and Relationship Education, civics education, and education in basic life skills such as financial literacy, first aid, and physical and mental health and wellbeing.

- Increase investment in education for students with disabilities and special educational needs and ensure all teachers and staff have an appropriate level of training.
- Improve access to, and quality of, education in both creative and vocational subjects.
- Maintain the school leaving age at 16.

Our higher education system is one that is world class. Our universities attract the best minds from across our country and across the world, that is something to be very proud of. We had to make very tough decisions during the coalition, including the decision to increase tuition fees which we know angered a lot of students and parents. The new funding system for universities has ensured that higher education funding is sustainable and competitive providing our universities with the funds they need to continue the world class research they are known for.

The Liberal Democrat record on tuition fees will require us to regain a lot of trust that we have lost, but it is important to highlight that it was the Liberal Democrats that built a fairer repayment system for tuition fee loans, meaning that graduates do not start to pay back their loans until after they earn £21,000 a year and we also ensured that maintenance grants were protected. We want to ensure that access to University is as wide as possible, and that our universities are not just the preserve of the wealthy but are accessible to all students. **To achieve wider access we will increase and expand maintenance grant providing students with the funds to cover living expenses that are to often bigger barriers to attending university.** With the increase in tuition fees we recognise the burden of repayment that it has on many students, that the spectre of student hanging over them in their early careers is not conducive to a happy life. **That is why we are proposing increasing the threshold at which students begin to pay back their loans to £25,000.**

We will do what we can to promote lifelong opportunities to learn, including by:

- Reassessing how tuition fees and application fees affect part-time students, post-graduate students, and students who change degrees, and explore options for increasing financial support for doctors, teachers, and nurses.
- Aiming to double the number of businesses hiring apprenticeships, including in new sectors such as creative and digital industries; ensure access to apprenticeships from currently underrepresented groups; and aim to ensure retraining opportunities are available to every individual.
- Expand higher vocational training to address skill gaps.

## 3.2 Keeping Britain Healthy

The NHS is the pride of Britain and it must be protected for it to continue to deliver the healthcare we all want and deserve. Alongside existing funding commitments made during the coalition we propose a small increase in income tax, 1%, to raise £6 billion that will be invested directly into the NHS. This will be a vital cash infusion into the NHS so it can continue to keep Britain healthy.

With the NHS facing winter crises with regular occurrence we must look deeper at the issues facing our health service. Money is one and with our investments we should see the funding gap begin to close, but it is how we treat health and social care. Too often A&E departments are inundated with patients that could have been treated much earlier and much easier in their own homes and local community. With an increasing population age we must acknowledge the impact social care will play on the NHS and take steps to ensure that we deliver good quality social care in the community.

Our priorities for health and social care will be:

- Putting a penny in the pound on income tax to give the NHS and social care the cash injection it needs.
- Transforming mental health care by setting waiting time targets to match physical health care.
- Better integration of health and social care and limiting the amount elderly people have to pay for social care.

The Liberal Democrats will establish a cross-party commission with the mandate of creating a consensus on the future of health and social care, ensuring that reforms made are widely supported ensuring their longevity. It is essential that all political parties come together on this issue because it is too important to be left on the shelf. In order to ensure consensus on this issue, the commission will include representatives from all UK political parties and all devolved Governments in the UK.

Our long term goal for health and social care in the UK is to bring them together into one seamless service, pooling budgets and responsibility to deliver joined up thinking governance.

For a truly world-class health and social care sector in the UK its staff need to be protected and supported to do what they do best.

- We will end the public sector pay freeze for NHS staff and social care workers, giving them a much needed pay rise after four years of sacrifices. With the economy in a much stronger place we believe the public purse can afford to give our health professionals a decent wage.
- It is essential that we encourage the next generation of health professionals and we will reinstate bursaries for Nursing students enabling them to study secure in



the knowledge that they won't have to worry about bills and focus on gaining the skills and training they need.

- We will also foster a working environment that all feel safe and secure in, and we will ensure this by protecting NHS whistleblowers when they report any bad practice or malpractice.
- We will support innovation in how organisations empower staff and patients, looking to how social enterprises and charities that deliver community-based and mental health care.
- Promote easier access to GP services, expand evening and weekend provision and encourage GPs to work in federations to allow greater choice to patients.
- Provide wider support to GPs to prevent mass-closures of practices.
- Encourage GPs to work in disadvantaged areas through a Patient Premium, similar to the Pupil Premium, that will incentivise clinicians to work in areas of deprivation to ensure better coverage of health services.
- Increase investment in public health and prevention.

Mental health has long been ignored, and it has been the Liberal Democrats in Government that has focused the attention onto how we tackle the serious problem of mental ill-health in our country. In Government we have fought tirelessly to tackle the stigma surrounding mental health, we legislated to ensure equity between mental and physical health, we introduced the crisis care concordat that drastically saw reductions in the number of people suffering from mental health ending up in prison cells and secured more money for children's and young people's mental health services. We took great strides forward, but there is much more to do.

- We will ringfence funding from the £6 billion investment to provide additional mental health investment.
- Continue to roll out and strengthen waiting times for mental health treatment, including a six week guarantee of access to treatment for depression or anxiety, and a two week guarantee that no child or young person will wait more than two weeks for treatment when the experience their first episode of psychosis.
- Transform provision of mental health support for pregnant women, new mothers and those who have suffered a miscarriage or stillbirth, and help them get access to early care when needed.
- Promote and invest in the Frontline programme that fast tracks graduates into social care work, as well the Think Ahead programme that encourages high-achieving graduates to pursue mental health social work.
- We will end out-of-area placements to ensure that you can be treated for mental health in your local community.
- Ensure that LGBT+ inclusive mental health services receive funding and support.

Our focus for health and social care in the UK is on prevention first, to treat patients as close to their homes as possible instead of forcing them into hospitals. Health and social



care in the UK is at breaking point and it requires a radical vision to ensure it continues to deliver the world-class services we all rely on. With our plans to directly invest more money into the NHS and promote greater community based care we can get deliver excellent care for everyone and keep Britain healthy.

## **CHAPTER 4. SUPPORTING FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES.**

### **4.1 A welfare system that works**

Benefits administration has, under Conservative ministers and Labour predecessors, been grossly mishandled. The Liberal Democrats acknowledge that a culture of uncertainty has developed, where individuals can be subject to arbitrary sanctions and inadequate assessments. This undermines the goal of ensuring that the benefits system is a helpline to work, a safety net, and has contributed to the struggles of many of the most vulnerable in society. To address this, the Liberal Democrats will:

- Replace the Work Capability Assessment Labour introduced. The Work Capability Assessment has failed. Stories of ludicrous sanctions are now endemic. Instead, we will implement a real world based, non-intrusive test, where the assessor meets the claimant rather than the other way round, and end the use of sanctions as a first resort.
- Reform the Personal Independence Payment assessment system in line with the above principles.
- Assess the plausibility of creating a singular assessment, benefit, and budget for those with disabilities.
- Rethink the privatisation of welfare administration, and the corrosive culture of targets and dehumanisation it encouraged, will be radically reformed or reversed within two years.
- Recognise sanctions have gone too far. Sanctions will no longer be implemented without due process, and prohibit them as a cost-cutting measure or as a first resort except in cases of provable fraud. We will introduce a 'yellow card' system where sanctions are used only against those who repeatedly and deliberately break the rules.
- Implement a new programme to help those with mental ill health find or retain employment, and raise awareness of and funding for Access to Work, which helps those with disabilities gain or retain employment. We will also promote flexible working hours and working from home arrangements.
- Separate employment support from benefits administration, refocusing Jobcentres on helping people find work, and strengthen coordination between Jobcentres and local NHS services to ensure people are entitled to the assistance they need.
- Ensure those using food banks are aware of their rights regarding welfare, and set up a fund to help the long-term food insecure.

The Liberal Democrats believe that it is neither fair nor responsible to balance the books on the backs of the least well-off. We support efforts to reform and streamline the benefits system, to cut waste and fraud, reduce administrative overspend, and tackle

the root causes of the high benefits bill by fighting for higher pay and a more inclusive society. We must, however, stop the demonisation of the unemployed and the vulnerable that has plagued our society, and increase support where appropriate. The Liberal Democrats will:

- Repeal the bedroom tax, and pursue collaborative approaches with local authorities to best achieve the goal of more effective use of the housing supply.
- Continue with the Universal Credit reform, which if implemented well can improve welfare provision and simplify the process for all, but ensure it is rolled out in an intelligent way. We want people to always be better off in work, and Universal Credit can help achieve this. We will, however, conduct a review to prevent 'cliff edges'.
- Increase Jobseekers Allowance and Universal Credit for young people in line with the minimum wage.
- Reform the cap on benefits - which will seriously jeopardise the integrity of our safety net by constituting a considerable real terms cut if maintained in its current form without amending. We will increase the cap in line with inflation, and in line with local living costs and household size. We will remove some welfare programmes from the cap over the first two years, or if budgetary limits do not permit make them count for half as much towards the cap, including:
  - Bereavement Allowance
  - Child Tax Credit
  - Employment and Support Allowance
  - Housing Benefit (if there is a risk of homelessness and no suitable alternative permanent housing in the area can be found)
  - Incapacity Benefit
  - Severe Disablement Allowance
  - Widowed Parents' Allowance

We do not support abolishing the cap altogether, as we believe it to be necessary for fiscal discipline and preventing perverse situations where work does not pay. However, we support amending it so that there is more allowance for shocks to household finances and for illnesses and disabilities that can place strain on family finances.

- Tie housing benefits to average local rents within an area, ensuring that it can help families in any part of the country pay their housing costs.

We will explore the implications of instituting a universal basic income or a negative income tax, to dramatically simplify administration, eliminate fraud, and provide a true safety net for all.

We estimate our reforms to welfare to cost approximately £3 billion per year.

## **4.2 Security in old age and retirement**

Life expectancy is increasing, and while this is obviously fantastic news, it does expose that our nation is facing considerable challenges in providing pensions and retirement security for an aging population.

In government, we have made great strides towards this, though more remains to be done. Led by Liberal Democrat pension minister Steve Webb, Liberal Democrats in government spearheaded several significant reforms and improvements to the pensions system, including:

- Abolishing the default retirement age so workers cannot be forced out of work on the basis of age, reflecting the fact that many older people both can and want to continue working.
- Implementing the “triple lock” guarantee, ensuring pensions rise in accordance with the highest of earnings growth, prices growth or 2.5%.
- Introducing auto-enrolment into pensions, giving millions of people an easy head start on saving for retirement.
- Ensuring pensioners benefit from the new tax-free personal allowance.

The Liberal Democrats are proud of these achievements. These legislative accomplishments have ensured more security and prosperity for current retirees, but also have promoted the long-term sustainability of our pension system. We will not only protect and build upon the above achievements, but explore proposals to give pensioners more say over how they can spend and invest their pension pots.

## **4.3 Fixing the housing market**

The housing market is in crisis. Having an affordable home, with the security that that entails, is a fundamental right upon which so much opportunity depends. Britain, however, is currently failing to provide the houses that we need to meet these needs. In government, the Liberal Democrats have made a start in addressing this - liberalising planning regulations, increasing the supply of affordable renting housing, pushing government departments to release land for new homes.

But more needs to be done. We need to build more homes. We need to make sure these homes are lasting, have good services and amenities, and are affordable. We need to free up housing stock that already exists, by discouraging excessive land banking and helping those who want to downsize homes to do so.

A Liberal Democrat government will increase the housing supply. We will:

- Set a homebuilding target of 300,000 new homes built per year, and will directly build homes to fill gaps left by the market. These homes will be energy efficient

and affordable, and will be connected to good services, shared green spaces and community facilities, and jobs, schools, and public transport.

- Build at least ten new garden cities, in supportive local communities. This measure will be accompanied by measures to help local authorities build green villages and green suburbs. We will prioritise building new garden settlements along the path of new and existing railway lines, including the East West line between Oxford and Cambridge.
- Allow for more green belt swaps. Green belt swaps allow local authorities to build on brownfield areas currently designated as greenbelt, provided they designate other lands as green belts instead and secure no loss of access to fields and green spaces. We will expand these powers to include low value agricultural field and other land types. We will also consult on creating “green tendrils”, allowing housing development to expand out of major cities in well-regulated manners without compromising the overall quality of the countryside around our cities.
- Legislate to incentivise Community Land Auctions, reverse auctions where private landowners bid for planning permission rights, allowing the local authority to capture the land value uplift from planning permission.
- Abolish Help to Buy - which raises demand and inflates prices at a time when we need to focus on increasing supply - but use the lessons and logic of that programme, and any savings from abolishing it, to establish a programme whereby the government more aggressively provides investment and borrowing guarantees to encourage more private housebuilding.
- Ensure the quality of housing is intended to as well - by making sure housing stock is available that is age-appropriate, suitable for those with disabilities, in keeping with local aesthetic choices, and promotes rather than restricts access to green space and exercise. This will ensure new housing developments endure in the long term.
- Use the tax code to incentivise further homebuilding. In centrally designated "red zones", with substantial housing need, we would offer corporation tax breaks to any company which makes considerable progress to homebuilding there. This will help cut costs at the margin and incentivise more homebuilding where it is needed most. We will also offer National Insurance holidays to small house building companies which build a certain quota of houses, to help encourage more diversification and competition within the construction sector.
- Offer grants to local government to incentivise and reward the building of a quota of homes and provide for necessary increases in local services and infrastructure, further promoting local control while encouraging more homes to be built.
- Create an Intermediate Housing Fund to invest in shared accommodation, affordable rent homes, shared ownership homes (where households buy part of the property and pay an affordable rent on top), and Rent to Buy homes (where

monthly payments will, over 30 years, gradually give the renters full ownership of the house).

These funding commitments will be met by capital spending and a new British Housing Investment Bank.

We will empower local communities to take a more active say in, and reap the economic benefits from, new housebuilding. We will:

- Allow local authorities to designate Housing Development Zones (HDZs), where land would be offered to developers with an expedited planning process.
- Explore land value taxation and other mechanisms to capture the benefits of new infrastructure investment and the granting of planning permission, allowing local communities to see the direct benefits of allowing new investment.
- Raise the local authority borrowing caps to allow for more housebuilding, and reform local authority borrowing rules to bring them closer in line with the European norm, where local authority housebuilding would be removed from Public Sector Net Borrowing calculations.
- Put local housing authorities in the front seat of our homebuilding strategy. We will require local authorities to develop a 15-year homebuilding plan, strengthen the Duty to Cooperate to help local authorities - such as Cambridge, Oxford and Luton - with insufficient space within their boundaries to meet housing need.
- Create a Community Right of Appeal against proposals that contradict or contravene a collaboratively and democratically constructed local plan, and restrict developer appeals against decisions made in line with said plans.
- Trial a scheme by which local authorities that fail to meet their planning targets will have to release the equivalent shortfall of land, to be used for self-build houses, bringing together greater incentives for authorities to build new homes and the benefits of planning liberalisation to build more homes. Local authorities will also be required to develop a register of those interested in self-build, and do what they can to meet such demand.

We will also make better use of existing housing stock. We will:

- Give local authorities new powers to:
  - Double council tax on second homes and 'buy to leave empty' properties.
  - Penalise excessive land banking, with new tax and regulatory powers, for properties with planning permission that have seen no progress after three years.
  - Have the option to end Right to Buy.
- Implement an Annual Tax on Enveloped Dwellings and a 3% SDLT surcharge on second homes to discourage land banking.

- Expand Change of Use laws to allow more types of properties - including retail and financial services - to be converted into housing using a streamlined process, to create an assumption in favour of approving such requests, and to allow local authorities to claim some of the windfall from changes in building value from the Change of Use for investing in more affordable housing.
- Increase support for those who wish to downscale to smaller and more suitable accommodation - to replace the punishing approach of the bedroom tax with a collaborative and positive approach.

## 4.4 Protecting home owners and renters

Solving our housing crisis is not just about building more houses, but it is about protecting individuals and households. It is about making sure that families do not fret about arbitrary evictions or an unfair balance between tenant and landlord. To protect both home-owners and renters, we will:

- Introduce a Rent to Own model.
- Allow tenants first refusal if their landlord sells the property.
- Expand Rent Repayment Orders to allow tenants to be refunded if landlords do not provide court-ordered improvements or whose properties contain serious threats to human health.
- Promote, as the default, multi-year tenancies with inflation-linked annual rent increases built on, to provide greater stability and certainty for renters.
- Ban letting fees for tenants, cap upfront deposits, and increasing minimum standards. We will ensure landlords cannot provide properties that tenants cannot reasonably be expected to pay the utility bills for.
- Provide a Help to Rent scheme, providing government backed tenancy deposit loans to all first-time renters under 30.
- Incentivise social landlords to reduce the number of tenants under-occupying their homes, to tackle overcrowding.
- Establish a National Landlords Register, to promote transparency, regulatory compliance, and tax enforcement. It will be voluntary and accessible at each local authority, but tenants can include their landlords without fear of reprisal, and complaints upheld against landlords will be recorded and kept on record for 5 years, and will entail an automatic duty to sign up.
- Oppose rent control proposals that threaten to reduce the supply of housing and discourage landlords from offering properties for affordable rent.

Homelessness, and the scandal of rough sleeping, is a national tragedy. We will:

- Establish a homelessness action fund, worth £250 million, to invest in:
  - Age-appropriate emergency accommodation and supported housing.
  - Health, skills training, and employment opportunities for the homeless.



- Ensuring each local authority has access to at least one provider of the Housing First model of housing provision for long-term homeless individuals.
- Repeal the Vagrancy Act of 1824, which makes it a criminal offence to sleep rough and beg. This act is a pre-Victorian relic that can be used by councils to exact draconian punishments upon those who need help the most.
- Establish a task force to ensure those with no fixed abode can still effectively verify their identity and engage with government services, including ensuring they can vote.
- Conduct a review of the type of help different individuals and families receive under homelessness legislation.

## 4.5 Stronger rural communities.

Liberal Democrats understand that, to create a fair society with opportunity for all and an economy that can draw upon all talents, all communities must have strong public services and a chance to develop and maintain a thriving sense of community and civil society. We are proud of the work our MPs have done, both as constituency representatives and as government ministers, in supporting rural communities. In government, we will:

- Establish a £4 billion Rural Investment Fund, capital spending to be appropriated in our first year in office, to provide for the goals in this section, as well as:
  - Ensure the rollout of a superfast broadband connection, with a download speed of 30Mbps, an upload speed of 6Mbps, and an unlimited usage cap, to every property in the UK.
  - Provide for a substantial increase in social and affordable housing.
  - Invest in rural enterprises, start-ups, and scale-ups.
  - Provide for strong public services and transport links.
- Continue to guarantee against post office closures and maintain Royal Mail's Universal Service Obligation. Affordable post should be attainable for everyone in the country.
- Develop the greater integration of rural services and transport networks - keeping services open by reducing costs and promoting cooperation - with a Community Budgets model for services such as GP surgeries, pharmacies, post offices and libraries, and a Total Transport model for public transport.
- Continue our work to achieve an expansive fuel duty discount scheme for rural areas.
- Increase police presence in rural communities by introducing "retained" officers able to respond swiftly to crimes and build up strong community relations.
- Ensure Ofcom regulates to provide fast and reliable mobile phone coverage for all areas of the country.

#### **4.6 Affordable childcare.**

In government we are proud of our record in expanding access to childcare and supporting paid parental leave, but much more remains to be done. The Liberal Democrats will:

- Introduce shared parental leave, allowing parents to decide, without gender bias from the state, how to divide up paid parental leave, if at all, as a right from day one of the child's birth. This will include an extra "use it or lose it" month, added to the statutory total if both parents take up leave, encouraging both parents to take some parental time off.
- Introduce a legal presumption for work being flexible unless there is a legitimate business reason for it not to be.
- Commit to a dramatic expansion in childcare. Our first priority will be providing 15 hours' free childcare a week for all two year olds with working parents. Our second priority will be 15 hours' free childcare for all working parents with children between nine months and two years. We will also promote and expand tax-free childcare.
- Ensure this system allows the use of whichever childcare option - including nurseries or childminders - that works best for the family's needs, and provides flexibility for parents who work unsocial hours or during school holidays.

#### **4.7 Stronger transport links.**

High-quality transport links are essential for almost all the goals the next government should have - economic prosperity, reducing air pollution and carbon emissions, ensuring opportunity and effective liberty for all, keeping communities strong and well-connected to both national and international networks. The Liberal Democrats will:

- Pursue a strategic airport policy, with a focus on climate change and local pollution concerns, and will veto any expansion of Heathrow airport and any other airport that is met with overwhelming local opposition. This is in stark contrast to the Conservatives, who have refused to rule it out and are constantly fudging the issue.
- Reform air passenger duty to a per-plane system with a surcharge on non-essential flights.
- Ensure all new rail franchises have a renewed focus on the needs of customers, including an ambitious investment agenda and plans for compensation and rectification in the event of delays and disruption. A rail ombudsman will be introduced, with the power to sanction companies and take action to enforce consumer rights.
- Promote light rail systems such as the Croydon Tramlink and Manchester Metrolink, with more funding for safety and infrastructure improvements and support for local authorities seeking to imitate these successful examples.

- Allow public sector bodies - including collectives of local authorities - and mutual firms set up by staff and passengers to bid for rail franchises.
- Increase spending to the Access for All programme, supporting access for disabled passengers on rail services.
- Pursue an ambitious programme of rail infrastructure upgrades, including twin-track routes to major cities, rail electrification, station upgrades, the reopening of small town and village train stations, and rail freight capacity as a more sustainable alternative to road freight.
- Promote valuable rail infrastructure projects such as:
  - Expanded train infrastructure in London, including the opening of night-time Tube services and Transport for London taking over appropriate Overground rail services.
  - Expanded Oyster card reach to the London commuter belt and the home counties.
  - Rail links within the south-west peninsula to bolster the resilience of local economies.
  - Rail infrastructure in the North.
  - Completion of the East West Rail, between Cambridge and Oxford via Bedford, Milton Keynes, and Bicester.
- Promote cycling and safe walking, including encouraging local authorities to implement cycling and safe walking programmes, supporting councils implementing pedestrianisation initiatives, and encouraging new housing developments to have cycling and walking capacities integrated from the ground up.
- Support the introduction of network-wide and smart ticketing systems.
- Support the bus network, including ensuring local authorities can have the right to govern bus services within their area - with an obligation to interconnect and work with other authority areas - and halting bus route closures pending a review of bus policies.

## **CHAPTER 5. A STRONG ECONOMY.**

### **5.1 An Industrial Strategy that Works for All.**

The other parties have failed to develop a long-term and enduring industrial strategy, and it is the Liberal Democrats who are providing bold leadership on this issue. Policymakers ignored the importance of the foundational economy and less high-value/cutting-edge firms; failed to adapt to deindustrialisation, exacerbating regional inequalities; presided over a hollowing out of the labour market with a decline of median-earning occupations and a resulting loss of social mobility; and failed to establish Britain at the forefront of the fourth industrial revolution

Under Liberal Democrat ministers Vince Cable and Graham Adiputera, the Liberal Democrats started developing a long-term and cohesive industrial strategy that includes all regions and sectors of the British economy and placed a renewed focus on the challenges, including environmental and technological, that face our country. We are proud of our efforts here, and with your support, we can do so much more.

The Liberal Democrats will:

- Reverse Dylan Macmillan's disastrous and politically motivated decision to abolish the Department for Business, Energy and Climate Change - depriving us of a government department able to take the lead on these issues, free from the pressures of the Treasury.
- Establish a Cabinet level subcommittee on industrial strategy, charged with coordinating the industrial strategy at every level of government and setting benchmarks and publishing reports to help in publicly holding the government to account on meeting its industrial strategy goals. We will build upon the industrial strategy developed as part of the coalition - including identifying industries that are key for our exporting and trading potential, such as motor vehicles, aerospace, low-carbon energy, chemicals, creative industries, offshore and subsea technology and more.
- Integrate industrial strategy with green and environmental considerations from top to bottom. UK industrial strategy and environmental policy have often been presented as two separate - and conflicting - goals. Liberal Democrats challenged this assumption, noting that it led to worse environmental outcomes and neglected the opportunities green economic growth would present.
- Establish an Industrial Strategy Challenge Fund, to provide prizes, grants, and subsidies to those businesses who are helping place the UK at the forefront of the fourth industrial revolution and help us address the challenges facing both the UK and the world.
- Unleash the full potential of the Green Investment Bank - the first of its kind in the world, a key accomplishment of the Liberal Democrats in government - by

expanding its remit, increasing its capitalisation, and giving it powers to raise money independently and issue green bonds.

- Set up a British Business Bank, with initial seed funding from government, to increase the supply of credit to Small and Medium Enterprises, structured as a public limited company. The British Business Bank will:
  - Provide a source of patient long-term capital, willing to engage in countercyclical lending and provide a focus on generating new economic assets that is sorely needed in our financial landscape, for new businesses, scale-ups, and businesses wanting to embark on new and innovative proposals.
  - Have a variety of economic instruments at its disposal - long-term loans for lower risk incremental activities, equity investments for high-risk innovation, products designed for specific societal challenges, and advisory services bolstered by in-house technical expertise.
  - Base the portfolio structures on best practices of venture capital firms, and explore options such as sharing IP rights and retaining equity in order to share in the wealth created by innovative companies that succeed with Business Bank support.
- Set up a Housing and Infrastructure Development Bank, to use an initial seed capital by the state to mobilise and leverage greater investment over time, to provide the funding needed for substantial investments in housing, infrastructure, transport services, and other projects needed to create an effective industrial strategy. The Housing and Infrastructure Development Bank will:
  - Provide a home for annuity funds looking to invest in the UK, allow individuals to invest as a means to provide stable long-term returns, give retail investors a means to have a safe long-term investment, and have fewer long term costs when compared to Labour's failed Private Finance Initiative scheme.
  - Be open to various methods to raise further seed capital in addition to a first year investment via capital spending, such as auctioning airport landing slots or parts of the radio spectrum.
- Create a new framework to govern public corporations such as the British Business Bank, the Housing and Infrastructure Development Bank, and the already existing Green Investment Bank. Liberal Democrats have been unique in understanding the role such public corporations can play, but we will reform the legal and regulatory framework around them by:
  - Following the budgetary framework used by most countries by excluding the liabilities of public corporations from the government debt estimates - providing more honest accounting and allowing the necessary investments to be made in our future economic prosperity.

- Providing for new monitoring and assessment frameworks to ensure they are encouraging investment that otherwise would not have happened – picking the willing rather than picking winners.
- Providing for strong governance frameworks – to avoid capture by interest groups, guard against weak performance, ensure there is no unfair competition with private sector, and maintain the balance between enabling democratic accountability and avoiding political interference.

## **5.2 Green Economic Growth.**

In our first year in parliament, we will unveil a £10 billion green stimulus package, as part of our pledge to make more effective use of capital spending and provide for an investment in the future. We will further supplement this by reinvesting £470 million, from administrative savings we will be able to deliver from the Department of Business, Energy and Climate Change budget, back into green stimulus.

Among the commitments to be made as part of this program, we will:

- Invest in the “circular economy”, by investing in infrastructure, training, research, materials, and loan guarantees for businesses and industrial clusters that are interested in embarking upon creating a circular economy: reuse; closed loop recycling; open loop recycling; biorefining; repair and remanufacturing; servitisation.
- Invest in resource and energy efficiency - with resource costs being a major drag on productivity and business viability. We will invest in embryonic energy efficiency markets, align incentives properly to ensure that landlords have an incentive to invest in the energy efficiency needs of both commercial and residential tenants, and reduce the costs and risks businesses incur in switching to more energy efficient systems.
- Expand the “clean exports” markets that the UK can use to play a leading a role in the global trend towards cleaner energy, reorganising the government’s support for exports to prioritise these efforts and providing additional funding to do so.
- Establish an ambitious research and investment programme, including figuring out on how to make these technologies deployable and marketable, in areas such as carbon capture and storage, energy storage, smart grid technology, hydrogen technologies, offshore wind, and tidal power. Recognising the cross-border challenge of climate change, this scheme will cover international as well as domestic politics.
- Invest in refurbishing shipyards in the North of England and Scotland to equip them to become global centres for offshore wind and marine renewable energy technologies.
- Invest in a bus scrappage scheme to replace old polluting buses with new cleaner buses.

- Enable a considerable programme for energy efficiency in schools, hospitals, and government properties, to ensure the government leads by example and use the government's purchasing power to generate further business opportunities for green companies.
- Support the development of electric vehicles throughout the UK, including by:
  - Investing in plug in car and van grants and infrastructure in EV charging points.
  - Experimenting with locally distributed energy systems and using the fleet battery of an electric vehicle fleet to smooth energy consumption against supply.
  - Developing a strong market for spare vehicle parts for electric vehicles.
  - Supporting a service-led manufacture model.
- Help energy intensive industries - such as steel, aluminium, glass, cement, chemicals, paper, ceramics, oil - with investment in carbon capture and storage, resource efficiency, the circular economy, and basic materials research.

In addition to these investments, we will:

- Increase the proportion of revenue collected by green taxes, including abolishing and scaling back favourable tax regimes for fossil fuels, reforming flight duty, and increasing green taxes such as the landfill tax.
- Use higher environmental and energy efficiency standards to create a race to the top, encouraging further innovation, and making UK manufacturers at the forefront of the global push for better environmental standards.
- Provide more regulatory assistance for renewable energy producers, including regulatory pre-approval for projects in certain locations and easier rules surrounding microgeneration.
- Encourage green financial products.

## **5.3 Leadership in Technology and Creativity.**

A strong industrial strategy and a prosperous economy requires making the most of our country's world-renowned capacity for technological innovation and creative ingenuity.

The fourth industrial revolution - new technologies that will transform work and everyday lives - poses both great new opportunities and serious challenges that require dedicated leadership. The UK has a competitive advantage in these areas, and the Liberal Democrats understand these issues. We will:

- Increase the science budget by at least £2.5 billion over the course of parliament as a minimum, with the long term goal of doubling innovation and research spending throughout the British economy, in the recognition that we are currently falling behind - including in critical fields such as green energy research

and medical research - when it comes to the basic research and high-risk projects that government funding serves as the best source for.

- Reform science and research funding to better appreciate the role interdisciplinary research has, and to resist efforts to dismiss certain research projects as wasteful or foolish, understanding that experts rather than politicians should be making these decisions.
- Create more 'catapult' centres for science and technology innovation, and build on the success of tech clusters - such as Cambridge's 'Silicon Fen' and London's Tech City - to create similar projects throughout the nation - including aiming for at least one tech cluster in each region and constituent nation of the UK.
- Help tech scale-ups with our scale-up strategy (in Section 5.4), as technology and research in particular stands much to gain from the innovation and disruption provided by new products and fresh competition.
- Promote the work of the Government Digital Service and the digital by default principle, encouraging increased use of digital platforms to provide easier customer support, cheaper administration, and revolutionary products that can make the UK a pioneer of technology in government operations.
- Escalate the release of government data - in a way that preserves individual privacy and business trade secrets - to allow companies to use such data to create new products and services and conduct better market research.
- Cooperate with other countries and private enterprises on better understanding and utilising transformative technologies - including AI, blockchain, quantum computing, and other such technologies.
- Maintain and, if possible, increase funding for the UK Space Agency and collaborative space projects with our European partners.
- Introduce Technology Impact Assessments into the policy design process.
- Promote digital skills training at every stage of the process - including digital skills courses for young people and the unemployed, by maintaining coding in the national curriculum, and by promoting greater entrepreneurship training.
- Reform the laws surrounding data - to give individuals greater power over how their data is used. To ensure greater efficacy and give these reforms greater sway in the global market, we will do what we can to promote these reforms at the European Union level.

We will promote our country's great cultural heritage and promising future - so essential both to quality of life and to our broader economic prospects. We will ensure everyone has access to culture, heritage and sport, as both an economic and a moral imperative.

The Liberal Democrats will:

- Protect the funding of sports and arts via the National Lottery.
- Introduce 'safe standing' at football clubs.
- Ensure free access to national museums and galleries and give these institutions greater autonomy to conduct research and take the public.



- Zero-rate e-books from VAT, ensuring that all books are affordable and that reading is never taxed.
- Support the creation and proliferation of open-source software, publicly available information, and alternatives to traditional intellectual property regimes such as prize systems.
- Support a strong intellectual property system that allows for creators to benefit from the works they produce and promote the proliferation of arts and sciences, while allowing for the sharing of ideas and knowledge and the fundamentals of free speech. We will strengthen free use protections, ensure derivative works and creative pursuits such as sampling and covers are permitted, and ensure any fees and punishments applied are fair and proportionate.
- Ensure intellectual property laws can suitably cover, and allow for the growth of, new mediums such as online video content and citizen journalism.
- Remove laws that criminalise circumventing technological measures that block access to or restrict the use of materials that would otherwise be legal to access. It is not logical to allow barriers to be put in place that prevent the use of materials that should legally be accessible to all.
- Protect the independence of the BBC from politically motivated attacks, such as those that we saw in the aftermath of the Conservatives' leak-gate scandal where prominent Conservatives saw to denigrate the BBC for their own leadership's moral failings.
- Maintain Channel 4 in public ownership.
- Protect the funding and editorial independence of Welsh language broadcasters, and provide further support to media channels for other minority languages within the UK. We will support greater competition and diversity within the media more generally.
- Support the growth of creative industries as part of our industrial strategy, including by:
  - Continuing to invest in the Creative Industries Council.
  - Ensuring our start-up and scale-up strategies cover the creative industries.
  - Investing in creative skills, at every stage of education and beyond.
  - Providing smart patent, copyright, and licencing laws.
  - Standing firm against censorship and attempts to scapegoat media for societal problems.
  - Treating new forms of media and culture - from video gaming to online entertainment - with the same seriousness and attentiveness that we provide to older and more established forms of culture.
  - Support digital archiving, of both new and old culture.
- Further support the tourism and heritage industry within the United Kingdom, with more powers and devolved funds and grants to those communities that wish to make it a key component of their local economic strategy.

- Promote the speedy and effective approval of visas for tourists and those wishing to help promote cross-cultural exchange and dialogue.
- Promote the evidence-based social prescribing of arts, culture, sports and other pursuits as methods to help tackle public health challenges such as obesity, poor mental health, and the like, and promote wider research into this field.
- Establish a Creative Enterprise Fund to help creative enterprises start up, scale up, or embark on risky and innovative endeavours.
- Establish a capital fund for improving local sports facilities and local sports clubs.
- Remove archaic restrictions that prevent broadcasters from satirising footage from Parliamentary proceedings.

## **5.4 Supporting Small and Medium Businesses.**

Small and medium businesses are the backbone of our economy. They are essential to innovation, opportunity, community, and attending to the needs of everyone in the UK. The Liberal Democrats will:

- Create new start-up and scale-up allowances to help small business owners better handle living costs, and afford to take risks, at the critical stage in their business growth.
- Expand business support and mentoring services.
- Support scale-ups by increasing access to talent from across the country and the world, providing more tax support and access to venture capital, and ensuring collaboration between scale-ups, other businesses, universities, local authorities, and other stakeholders. We will provide easier to navigate regulatory frameworks, help replace incentives to sell with incentives to build, and fight policy biases that favour market incumbents. Among specific measures we will take are:
  - Provide publicly available data sets to allow easier identification of, and therefore collaboration with and support for, scale-ups.
  - Require Local Enterprise Partnerships to provide reports on the scale-up situation within their area, including on the top 50 business scale-ups.
  - Provide resources for collaborative initiatives aimed at helping scale-ups grow.
  - Ensure university students are able to get in touch with local start-ups in the vicinity.
  - Provide a 'Scale-Up Visa' to help scale-ups get the employees they need to produce new ideas, develop new products and services, and build up global markets and supply chains.
  - Provide learning and networking opportunities for scale-up business growth.
  - Use government procurement power to increase business for and draw attention to scale-ups.

- Monitor gaps in finance provision and infrastructure support between scale-ups and other companies.
- Embark on an ambitious agenda of regulatory reform. We understand the importance regulation can have in standards and conditions in all areas, but that regulation must be conducted in a smart and intelligent way. We will:
  - Reform the Regulatory Policy Committee to reduce uncertainty and support new markets and investments.
  - Allow small and medium businesses who operate in multiple areas to designate one local authority as the Primary Authority, to ensure that - in cases where conflicts between authorities do not arise and where business practices remain uniform throughout - businesses need consult and liaise with only one authority.
  - Trial a One Stop Shop system for regulation, giving businesses one authoritative place to go for regulatory compliance and consultation, with reduced consequences for errors if the fault lies with the One Stop Shop and if the regulations violated are not designated as “core” regulations.
  - Trial regulatory flexibility programs, to allow businesses to, in cases where regulations do not serve a coordinating affect, focus on the intended outcomes from regulations rather than the processes.
  - Require regulatory agencies, especially those that interact regularly with scale-ups, start-ups, mutuals, cooperatives, social enterprises, and public interest companies, to report on their regulatory efficiency and ease of business in comparison with other countries.
  - Trial a scheme of Regulatory Legal Aid.
- Replace business rates and Non-Commercial Stamp Duty - a disincentive to investment and procurement - with a land value tax, better allowing local and central government to recoup the benefits from state-driven infrastructure investment. This will give most businesses a net cut and remove the burden of payment from tenant to landowner. It will also encourage vacant lots to be put to use, allowing more opportunities for housebuilding and small business development.
- Protect independent pubs and ensure they can remain independent, including by implementing a market rent only option for tied-pub tenants and ensuring the market does not become monopolised by pubcos.
- Protect live music and nightlife venues, and stop future closures, by:
  - Building on the work of the Live Music Act, championed by Liberal Democrat parliamentarians, which removed onerous licencing requirements, by continuing to remove unnecessary licencing rules.
  - Appointing a ‘Night Life Czar’ in the office of Culture, Media and Sport.
  - Permitting staggered closing times.

- Introducing 'Agent of Change' laws for planning permission around nightlife venues, so that venues do not have to incur the costs borne from new properties being built around them.
- Prioritising establishment of the Night Tube in London, and consulting on options in similar large cities with thriving nightlife scenes.
- Ensuring venues do not face standards of criminal liability for crimes committed within the venue that are not unreasonably in excess of standard business liability rules.

## 5.5 Bringing Prosperity to the Whole Country.

Prosperity and opportunity are unequally distributed throughout our country. Some towns and regions feel, justifiably, left behind. Not only is this an injustice, but it means our nation is not making the most out of all the talent, hard work and innovation that individuals from every background can bring to the table. The Liberal Democrats will:

- Continue the Regional Growth Fund, established under Liberal Democrats, to assist areas heavily reliant on public spending to shift to more private-sector driven economies.
- Set up dedicated programs, bolstered by capital spending and managed by public corporations, to boost economic growth and opportunity in the North of England, the Midlands, and Cornwall, and work with devolved governments to do the same in Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland.
- Recognise that economic decisions are often better made at a regional and local level, provided there is fair competition between regions, a sharp focus on market and government failures alike, and a base level of sustainability and opportunity. We will:
  - Devolve further revenue-raising and investing powers to regions throughout the country, from Cornwall to the North East.
  - Give regions and councils greater control over levers of economic development, especially skills, planning, transport, infrastructure, regulation and housing policies.
  - Encourage innovation at regional and local policy levels.
- Provide assistance to areas heavily dependent on unsustainable fossil fuel industries, including the North East of Scotland, to diversify their economy and develop more sustainable areas of economic strength.
- Support the establishment of catapult centres and cluster hubs to better exploit and build upon already existing areas of local economic strength.
- Use central government procurement policy to promote businesses in all parts of the country.
- Require banks to develop a local banking sector that can provide patient capital investment to innovative local SMEs and provide financial support and locally tailored economic advice to businesses in all parts of the country. If private

banks cannot provide this service in a given area, we will work with local authorities to establish a locally managed publicly owned bank based on the German model.

Ensuring a healthy and fair economy requires a wide variety of businesses. Not just top down corporations run for shareholders, but cooperatives, mutuals, social enterprises, and community interest companies. We must also ensure all individuals can reap the benefits of economic growth and that if a business is thriving its employees share in that prosperity. To achieve these goals, the Liberal Democrats will:

- Provide for dedicated assistance - including subsidy and financial support to help deal with the unique problems and challenges such businesses face, as well as considering support via government procurement and considering if new tax and regulatory regimes are more appropriate - for cooperatives, mutuals, social enterprises, and community interest companies.
- Give staff in listed companies with more than 250 employees the right to request shares, to be held in trust for the employees' benefits, and to request representation on the board and remuneration committees. These measures will increase employee roles in decision-making and give them a chance to share in ownership of the company.
- Reform the laws around fiduciary duty and company purpose rules to better allow for all important factors - including environmental standards, employee concerns, and local community interests - to be fully included in corporate decisions made.
- Promote corporate transparency and accountability by reducing the reporting requirement of shareholdings to 1% and giving boards and employees more power over executive pay.
- Conduct a full review of government policies surrounding interaction with business to ensure it meets the needs of cooperatives, mutuals, social enterprises, and community interest companies, and is supportive of businesses of every type.
- Do what we can to protect and promote mutualisation and building societies in financial services, including examining the operations of financial regulators and assessing whether government can identify further cases where it can provide business to mutuals and building societies, for example with our capital spending and housebuilding programmes.
- Expand the Social Value Act to allow a greater role for employee-owned and community-benefit companies in government procurement decisions.
- Consult with charities about how best to reform charities law in order to help charities and promote public trust and donations.
- Develop a 'philanthrocapitalism' strategy in consultation with charities and businesses, ensuring the proliferation of best practices in the growing sector.

## **5.6 A Decent Living for Everyone.**

The Liberal Democrats believe that work should provide dignity, opportunity, stability. A good job should be a foundation upon which everyone in the United Kingdom can build a good life for themselves and their family. We need to ensure everyone has a chance of earning a decent living, of contributing to a productive economy, and of ensuring that the unscrupulous minority of employees who do not appreciate their employees are held to account. The Liberal Democrats will:

- Fully implement gender pay gap reporting for companies with larger than 250 employees - including requiring both part-time and full-time data is published, encouraging the reporting of partner compensation, encouraging the publication of more qualitative data and action plans, and including full detail on what fines will exist for non-compliance. We will also implement mandatory reporting requirements around the portion of employees on less than local living wages and the ratio between top and median pay, and develop voluntary schemes for reporting pay gaps around disability and ethnicity.
- Set a fair Living Wage, require all government departments to pay it, and use contracting and procurement power to encourage its adoption.
- Improve enforcement of employment rights and close loopholes surrounding the minimum wage, by ensuring employers cannot dilute rights by illegitimately reclassifying workers, phasing out unpaid internships, and phasing out employment tribunal fees. We will ask the Low Pay Commission to suggest a new minimum wage, and implement it if necessary.
- Continue to oppose Conservative attempts to curtail collective bargaining and union rights, and support the political freedoms of union members by allowing them to choose which party they support via the political levy.
- End abuse of zero hours contracts, legislating to end exclusivity contracts, as the last parliament called for, and create a formal right to request a fixed contract and to make regular patterns of work contractual.
- Understand that flexible working arrangements will have their place in our future economy and in empowering individuals to earn money and get on the employment ladder, but they must be administered fairly. We will update employment legislation to be better suited to the gig economy, and ensure those jobs are fulfilling.

## **5.7 A Banking System that Works for All.**

In government the Liberal Democrats have worked to end reckless casino banking and implemented a Bank Levy to make sure banks pay their fair share. We are committed to ensuring the financial sector works for all, and that all parts of the nation and the

economy can benefit from its work, but also recognise that British finance is a major economic success story. The Liberal Democrats will:

- Promote competition and innovation by encouraging new entrants, promoting the use of alternative financing models such as crowdfunding, and promoting community banking and building societies.
- Encourage the financial sector to shift its focus to productive investment and addressing regional inequalities.
- Support innovation within the financial sector, including by encouraging and supporting investment within fintech and the development of new financial products to help implement green economic growth and our industrial strategy. We will also invest in cybersecurity, an especially important issue for finance.
- Require regulators to promote financial inclusion as a core objective, to help the millions encumbered with problem debt, lack bank accounts, and have very low savings.

## **CHAPTER 6. RIGHTS, JUSTICE AND EQUALITY.**

### **6.1 Crime and Policing**

Crime has been reducing over the years, but we are seeing spikes in types crime, especially violent crime, and with Police forces having to make do with fewer resources it is important that the Police have the tools and capabilities to keep us all safe, including community policing and outreach programmes to disadvantaged and minority communities that are too often fertile breeding grounds for crime and radicalisation.

The Liberal Democrats will:

- Provide a cash injection of £300 million into police force budgets, reinforcing community policing and intelligence.
- End the 1% cap on police pay.
- Foster greater community confidence in the police through outreach programmes and community cooperation between police and community leaders.
- Resource BAME staff associations such as the National Black Police Association to greater increase BAME representation within police forces
- Encourage greater pooling of back office workloads to further free up police officer time from administrative tasks to fighting crimes.
- Maintain our commitment to Europol and other international policing organisations to further increase our access to information databases to combat crime.
- Require all frontline police officer to wear body cameras, protecting the public from police abuse and protecting the police from malicious attacks.
- Provide funding for a National Rape Crisis helpline, staffed by trained experts.
- Review the role of Police and Crime Commissioners, and consult on potential changes to police oversight.
- End the anomaly that Police Scotland and Scottish Fire and Rescue Service pay VAT on their purchases.
- Explore options of expanding crime maps, including automatic reporting of fraud losses by debit and credit card providers.
- End imprisonment for illegal drug possession for personal use and refer to substance abuse treatment and education-based recovery, or impose civil penalties.
- Break the grip of criminal gangs by introducing a legal, regulated market for cannabis. We would introduce limits of potency and permit cannabis to be sold in licensed outlets to adults over the age of 18.
- Focus police manpower on finding and prosecuting those responsible for the manufacture, import and distribution of illegal drugs
- Move drugs policy lead from the Home Office to the Department of Health.



## **6.2 Tackling extremism and terrorism**

Terrorism and extremism remain a very real threat to the United Kingdom, which requires a proportionate response that keeps us all safe but does not sacrifice our values in the name of security. The Liberal Democrats will:

- Work with religious and community leaders, civil society groups and social media sites to counter narratives put forward by extremists and provide a space for free expression of opinions and religious interpretation.
- Maintain and strengthen, where needed, anti-terrorism legislation, including proscription of terrorist groups Terrorism Prevention and Investigation Measures, and Temporary Exclusion Orders which provide the police and Security Services the tools and time to maintain our safety.
- Review the process of assessing threats against minority ethnic and religious communities to ensure that everyone is properly protected.
- Ensure that anti-terrorism policy does not alienate Muslim or other minority ethnic and religious communities, ensuring that Britain remains a multicultural and inclusive place for all who chose to live here.
- Support de-radicalisation programmes that seek to undo the damage caused by foreign and domestic recruiters, and pursue recruiters with the full force of the law.

## **6.3 Criminal Justice**

The criminal justice system in our country is broken, too many are in prison, our reoffending rates are high and our prisons are in crisis, many of them squalid, in need of repair and woefully understaffed. The Liberal Democrats will:

- Introduce a Victim's Bill of Rights, that will create a single point of contact for victims throughout the criminal justice system, detail victim's right to information and ensure that information is delivered, and give the victim the right to request restorative justice instead of a prison sentence.
- Introduce a presumption against short term prison sentence for non-violent crimes and increase the use of non-custodial punishment including strict curfew orders, GPS tagging and extensive community service.
- Transform prisons into places of rehabilitation and learning, where a prison sentence is meant to reform offenders and provide them with the necessary skills for them to re-enter society once their sentence has been served.
- Extend the responsibility of the Youth Justice Board to all offenders under 21, and give them the responsibility to commission mental-health services.
- Establish a Women's Justice Board and a LGBT+ Justice Board with remits to meet the special needs of women and LGBT+ offenders.

- Restore Legal Aid funding, ensuring that everyone has access to decent representation throughout the criminal justice system.
- Continue to modernise and simplify court proceedings.
- Ensure the UK retains international agreements for jurisdiction, the recognition and enforcements of judgments and for family cases currently enjoyed under the EU Brussels I and Brussels II regulation and the Hague child abduction convention.

## 6.4 Immigration and Asylum

Immigration is under attack. Immigration is essential for our country. We depend on immigration for the success of our country, immigrants who come to our country are doctors, nurses, agricultural workers, teachers, scientists and business leaders. They provide such greatness to our country and they presence should be welcomed in the open, modern and tolerant country that is the United Kingdom. We reject the notion that we must bring immigration down to tens of thousands, but propose an immigration system that is fair and transparent, an immigration system that works for the entire country.

We must also not shirk on our international responsibilities to protect those fleeing from persecution and war. Refugees are desperate people and they deserve our compassion and warmth. The Liberal Democrats are proud of nation's history of a welcoming country to immigrants and refugees, where we protect the weak and assist those seeking refuge from war, persecution, famine and disease. It is our moral obligation to help our fellow man and the Liberal Democrats will never forget that responsibility.

The Liberal Democrats will:

- Ensure strong borders, that are policed properly with a well funded Border Force, re-introduce entry and exit checks at all ports ensuring we are able to maintain proper records of who is entering and exiting our country.
- Hold an annual debate on Skills and Labour shortages in Parliament, ensuring that lawmakers are follow aware of the shortages our nation faces and can attract the necessary immigration to fill those gaps.
- Recognising their largely temporary status, remove international students from official migration statistics.
- Ensure that the United Kingdom is an attractive place to study and work, ensure that visas are processed quickly and transfer additional powers to devolved authorities to sponsor additions post-study work visa.
- Provide further funding for additional training in English as a second language courses for new and existing immigrants helping them to faster integrate with their new country.

- We will apply the asylum system fairly and equally, including the process for people who have no right to be here.
- Expand the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme to 50,000 over the lifetime of the next Parliament, and re-open the Dubs unaccompanied child refugee scheme by taking in 3,000 unaccompanied child refugees.
- End indefinite detention by imposing a 28-day limit.
- Speed up processing of the asylum claims, and expect working-age asylum claimants who have waited for more than six months to seek work similar to other benefit claimants.

## 6.5 Promoting Equalities and Fairness

The Liberal Democrats have a long and proud history on promoting and advancing equal rights throughout our society. Throughout our history we have led the change of laws decriminalising homosexuality, providing safe and free abortions for women, the repeal of section 28 and the fight for equal adoption rights. In Government we have continued this fight and delivered same-sex marriage giving everyone the same right to marry. There is still a long way to go and the Liberal Democrats will:

- Set a target to see a million more women in work by 2020, through providing better, high quality jobs, back to work support and training, and better childcare provision.
- Challenge gender stereotyping and work with schools to promote healthy and positive body image and widespread understanding of sexual consent law.
- Implement new pay reporting measures for business with over 250 employees, including Gender Pay and Ethnicity Pay gaps.
- Continue the drive for greater business leadership diversity with targets of 30% of board membership to be made up of women, at least one BAME board member, and greater diversity amongst senior management ranks.
- Permit humanist weddings and opposite sex civil partnerships.
- Promote international recognition of same sex marriage and civil partnerships.
- Ask the Advisory Committee on Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs periodically to review rules around men who have sex with men donating blood to consider what restrictions remain necessary.
- Remove fees for Gender Recognition Certificates, and consult on how to de-medicalise the transition process for trans people, including self-identification of gender.
- Conduct a review of the over-representation of BAME people in the criminal justice system.
- Encourage use of finance and investment into business start-up by BAME people, building on the coalition's Access to Finance report.

- Take action to end period poverty, including by removing the tampon tax and providing sanitary products in schools and hospitals.
- Take stronger criminal action, including introducing new criminal offences, against:
  - Caste discrimination.
  - Female genital mutilation.
  - Upskirting.
  - Revenge porn and other forms of non-consensual pornography.
  - Conversion therapy.

## 6.6 Civil Liberties

The Liberal Democrats are a unique force in British politics for being consistent advocates of civil liberties, even when such a cause has been unpopular. We should all be free from an overarching state, and all be free from domination or subjugation from any source. Human rights should be treated as the nonviolable rights that they are. The Liberal Democrats will:

- Oppose any attempt to abolish, water down, or sidestep the Human Rights Act and the European Convention on Human Rights.
- Reject moral panics, refute calls for censorship, and attempts to impose a 'Snooper's Charter'.
- Support effective self-regulation of the press, and stand up for press freedoms by introducing a statutory public interest defence for certain cases where journalists may break the law; continue efforts to reduce the chill of libel threats; safeguard the position of investigative journalists by establishing clear guidelines for balancing privacy and the public interest; and ensure judicial investigations do not unnecessarily compromise journalists' sources.
- End the ability of ministers to veto Freedom of Information requests.
- Ensure mere offensiveness is not a criminal offence.
- Review, and commence reforms and if necessary repeals of, potentially archaic and overly intrusive laws, such as:
  - Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994, sections 63-66, which targets rave culture.
  - Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA), sections 49 & 54, which can compel the handover of encryption keys and then prevent the individual from even discussing it with anyone.
  - Communications Act 2003, Section 127, which needs sensible reform for the internet age.
  - Provisions of the Criminal Justice Act 2003 that impose unfair blanket restrictions on defendants who test positive for certain drugs.

- Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011, sections 142-149, which limit protests near Parliament.
- Crime and Courts Act 2013, section 40, which can require publications to pay legal fees even if they win the case.
- Enact a Freedoms Act, to expand regulations and protections around metadata collection, undercover police operations, CCTV usage, biometric data, kettling, mosquito devices, pre-emptive arrests, and other methods that, in the wrong hands, can greatly threaten freedom.
- Enact a Digital Bill of Rights, to ensure and protect online personal privacy, an individual's right to decide how their data is used, and the principle of net neutrality.
- Scale back the petty over-regulation of everyday life, including removing licensing requirements for leafleting for community events, liberalising restrictions on songs and readings at ceremonies and parties, and permitting swimming in open bodies of water.

## **CHAPTER 7. A GREENER BRITAIN.**

### **7.1 Five Green Laws.**

In our first year in Parliament we will enact ‘five green laws’ to ensure our country remains a global leader in fighting climate change, preserving the environment and natural beauty, and standing firm against pollution and environmental degradation. This is in addition to our bold green stimulus, our incorporation of environmental needs into industrial strategy, and our greening of the tax code.

Firstly, we will implement a Nature Act, to:

- Place the Natural Capital Committee, which advises the government on the state of the UK’s natural resources and precious natural assets, on a statutory footing, ensuring future governments cannot disband it without going to Parliament.
- Require the government, with the help of the Natural Capital Committee, to develop a 25 year plan on recovering nature, with annual reports to government, and to set concrete targets on issues such as biodiversity, clean air and water, natural habitats, and endangered species, as well as provide recommendations on how best to meet those targets.
- Implement a Public Sector Sustainability Duty, with government authorities and public bodies having to meet ever increasing environmental and sustainability standards.
- Create a new body, securely funded and protected from political interference, to serve as stewards of our nation’s forests.
- Embark on an ambitious tree-planting programme, aiming to plant one tree for every resident of the UK over the next ten years.
- Leverage public and private funds to protect biodiversity internationally, including:
  - Developing new regulations and certifications to fight illegal wildlife smuggling and the illegal timber trade.
  - Protecting rainforests and other endangered areas of biodiversity, including by purchasing land and sponsoring animals to protect them from illegal woodcutting and poaching.
  - Conducting and proliferating research and best practices development into how best to protect biodiversity, including assisting with projects such as the Global Seed Vault and promoting sustainable development practices.
- Suspend the use of neonicotinoids until we can be certain that they are not harming bees and other pollinators, and embark on an ambitious research programme into colony collapse disorder.

- Launch a consultation process into creating new National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Beauty, with a view to creating at least five new National Parks by the end of Parliament.
- Create a sustainable water abstraction regime, and promote water metering and higher water efficiency standards.
- Support the creation of protected marine nature reserves internationally, and create a 'blue belt' of protected marine areas here at home.
- Reduce animal experimentation - increasing research into alternatives and requiring research only be conducted when necessary.
- Increase the maximum criminal penalties for animal cruelty, from six months to five years, and increase enforcement of laws against illegal pet smuggling.
- Expand the Right to Roam.

Secondly, we will pass a Resource Efficiency and Zero Waste Britain Act, which will:

- Complement the work of our "circular economy" drive as part of the green stimulus and the increase in landfill taxation.
- Set a statutory recycling target of 70%.
- Enforce regulation, to both benefit consumers and the environment, that enhances repairability, reuse, and recycling.
- Introduce a 5p charge on disposable coffee cups, discourage the use of plastic straws, implement a 5p tax on plastic bags, and ban the use of microbeads.
- Increase penalties for waste crime, and provide councils with more resources to fight flytipping and promote recycling and composting.
- Consult on implementation of an incineration tax.
- Support efforts to use waste for procedures such as anaerobic digestion and fertiliser, working on ways to use waste to fuel and feed our country.

Thirdly, we will pass a Green Transport Act, which will:

- Implement a National Air Quality Plan to prevent the thousands of preventable deaths from air pollution every year, requiring the most polluted towns and cities to implement Low Emission Zones and, if necessary, trial Ultra Low Emission Zones; change the MOT process to include emissions reductions as a statutory goal; work with the car industry to improve the environmental impact of car part replacements; and consider the implementation of new taxes and emissions trading schemes on industrial and transport pollutants.
- Require every new bus and taxi is Ultra Low Emission by 2025, and every car on the road meets that standard by 2030, and support vehicle scrappage schemes as a means for expediting this.
- Support the British car industry in developing new and innovative products, such as driverless cars and personal electric vehicles, and facilitate and expedite the commercial introduction of clean and ultra low emissions vehicles, for both domestic and international markets.

- Require all major rail routes to be electrified by 2025.

Fourthly, we will pass a Zero Carbon Britain Act, which will:

- Replace current renewable energy subsidies for highly polluting wood pellet burning, worth approximately £800 million per year, and refocus those funds towards incentivising clean energy instead.
- End unabated coal in power generation by 2025.
- Promote research and development into Carbon Capture and Storage.
- Set legally binding targets for a net zero-greenhouse gas economy by 2050, with an 80% reduction by 2040, with a 60% target for clean and renewable energy by 2030.
- Accept nuclear energy can play a role in decarbonisation, provided environmental, safety, and waste disposal concerns are attended to and there is zero public subsidy for no build.
- Argue for reform of EU policies on biomass and biofuels that drive deforestation, including ending all support for food crop based biofuels within five years, while accepting that biomass and biogas can play some role in our energy makeup.
- Support new international development projects on both climate change mitigation and adaptation.
- Require 50% of all profits from shale gas to fund energy efficiency, renewable energy and heat infrastructure and deployment, community energy schemes, and research into low-carbon and low-pollution technologies.
- Require all finished shale oil gas wells, or otherwise viable former fossil fuel sites, to be made available at no cost to geothermal heat developers.

Fifthly, we will implement a Green Buildings Act, to:

- Create a long-term ambition for every home to reach at least an energy efficiency rating of Band C by 2030, and continue investments in retrofitting, double-glazing, insulation and microgeneration in homes across the country, including as part of our green stimulus. We will focus energy efficiency efforts on poorer homes and communities, private rented and social housing, and areas liable to power shortages in the event of a crisis, to reduce fuel poverty, with the Band C target to apply to such areas by 2025.
- Continue to promote community energy generation schemes, and innovate with city-scale demonstration projects for new clean technologies and community-wide energy efficiency initiatives and retrofits.
- Implement innovative strategies, such as identifying those most in need of fuel efficiency assistance by using the NHS and benefits administration offices, and special schemes to be developed for rural areas.
- Provide council tax relief, subsidies, and loans for dramatic increases in energy efficiency, solid wall insulation, renewable heat and energy maintenance and investments, and other schemes.



- Legislate to eventually apply the Zero Carbon Standard to all new homes and non-domestic buildings.
- Continue to back new entrants into the energy market, making it easier for people to switch by setting up fuel exchanges and requiring companies to make switching as seamless as possible. This will bring down tariffs and reduce fuel poverty.

## 7.2 Food and farming.

Agriculture is an essential part of our economy and society, and the Liberal Democrats think food policy has been neglected for far too long. The Liberal Democrats will:

- Push for continued reform of the EU's Common Agricultural Policy, ending CAP production and export subsidies and shifting subsidy from the landowner to the producer, ensuring subsidies no longer place small family-run farms at a competitive disadvantage.
- Work towards our ideal subsidy system - one that ensures there is a floor in place for family farms in case there is a drop in the market, subsidies to help manage the costs of food production, and focusing subsidies on producing healthy food products, sustainability, conservation and tackling climate change.
- Focus support on small-scale, start-up, and scale-up farmers, promoting variety in the food produced and investing in infrastructure that promotes trade and export.
- Allow the corporate areas of farming - including largescale arable and industrial dairyfarming - to operate without need of government assistance.
- Build upon CAP's work in promoting biodiversity.
- Push for continued reform of the Common Fisheries Policy, to best promote sustainability and increase competitiveness.
- Use public procurement to promote healthy, environmentally sustainable, local food.
- Work to prevent vertical consolidation at any stage of the supply chain.
- Support the work of the Groceries Code Adjudicator in ensuring supermarkets pay farmers a fair deal for the food that they produce.
- Prevent the use of cages, crates and routine preventative antibiotics in livestock except when absolutely necessary, and promote further animal welfare developments in agriculture.

## 7.3 Enduring Communities.

Recent floods have been a harsh reminder of the need to protect our communities from the most devastating forces of nature. Climate change, which is likely to require at least some adaptation, will only sharpen these challenges. The Liberal Democrats will:

- Establish a £2 billion Flood Prevention Fund - capital spending with a focus on fighting upstream flooding and the knock-on effects such floods have on downstream and coastal areas, helping communities deal with the impacts of erosion, requiring higher standards for buildings and infrastructure in high flood risk areas, implementing regulations to prevent new builds that may exacerbate flood risks, supporting back-to-nature flood prevention schemes, and improving flood defences.
- Review the planning system for flood defence installation and maintenance.
- Develop a climate change adaptation plan, to help government, businesses, communities, and individuals prepare for foreseeable climate change eventualities.
- Help farmers adapt to climate change impacts, and also assist them in mitigation, through policies such as better livestock management, protecting soil and forest carbon sinks, restoring floodplains, using innovative new farming techniques, and planting in uplands.
- Promote Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems to save money for the taxpayer in the long-term.
- Update regulations to future-proof buildings against the weather effects of climate change.

## **CHAPTER 8. A BETTER WORLD.**

The Liberal Democrats are internationalists – we believe that in a world of threats that do not respect borders or have no concept of nation-states, we must work with other nations in a collaborative way to face threats that we cannot face alone and unlock prosperity and opportunity that would be beyond the reach of individual nations.

It is this insight that underlines the Liberal Democrat worldview. We are patriotic, optimistic, and progressive, determined to work with our friends to advance our values, create a safer world for all, and protect our allies and ourselves.

### **8.1 Global Peace and Security**

At this challenging time for peace and security across the globe, the UK must reassert its role as a leader in international institutions such as the UN, NATO and the Commonwealth. The Liberal Democrats will:

- Champion the rules-based international order. Though acknowledging it needs reform, it is by far the best mechanism for developing multilateral solutions to issues that countries cannot handle adequately or equitably without collective action, and provides an avenue for peaceful collaboration and dispute resolution sorely lacking throughout much of human history.
- Support the UN principle of Responsibility to Protect, using all means at our disposal – with military intervention a last resort only to prevent mass civilian casualties when all other options have failed – to prevent and mitigate violent conflict and crimes against humanity.
- Support international actions – at both the European and the global level – to develop lasting solutions to the refugee crisis. This will include a substantial investment of resources, including to those countries already hosting considerable numbers of refugees.
- Supporting global exchange, visible diplomacy, and volunteer programmes as a means of building our soft power.
- Improve control of arms exports by implementing a “presumption of denial” for all arms exports to countries identified as facing serious human rights concerns; enforcing end-user certification on all future arms exports deals; and creating a public registry of arms brokers to support transparency.
- Seek new solutions to the conflict in Syria, with a focus on enabling humanitarian aid, enforcing all agreed-upon ceasefires and humanitarian corridors, enforcing red lines regarding chemical attacks against civilians, and providing substantial and meaningful support to the moderate opposition within Syria, including in building up norms of human rights and good governance.
- Support democratic movements in the aftermath of the ‘Arab Spring’, by investing in civil society and good governance.

- Fight against violent extremism in all its forms and in all its incarnations, using both soft and hard power to do so.
- Stand firm with the people of Ukraine against Russian interference and exert political and economic pressures to stop an increasingly assertive Russia from interfering in the affairs of its sovereign neighbours. We will promote energy independence from Russia across Europe
- Provide wholehearted support to efforts to secure complete, verifiable, and irreversible military denuclearisation of both Iran and North Korea.
- Support a negotiated peace settlement and a two-state solution between Israel and Palestine, standing up for the human rights and the right to self-determination of all, and condemning disproportionate military force from all sides.

## 8.2 Promoting Liberal Values

Our foreign policy should both adhere to and promote liberal values and democracy worldwide. We are an internationalist party, who do not believe human rights depend upon one's nationality. The Liberal Democrats will:

- Assist in electoral monitoring and good governance efforts wherever possible.
- Fully fund the BBC World Service, BBC Monitoring, and the British Council.
- Champion the free flow of information globally, supporting the rights of journalists and dissidents, keeping the internet free. We will enact a new law to ensure British companies and innovations are not used by foreign dictatorships to stamp out dissent or violate human rights, and fully fund UNESCO's International Programme for the Development of Communication.
- Support a dramatic increase in Interpol resources, conditional on other countries contributing to, as part of our strategy to combat international crimes such as people trafficking, weapons smuggling, and environmental crime. We will promote giving Interpol a new mandate to build trust between police departments by fighting corruption and capture by transnational organised crime.
- Promote certification efforts to prevent conflict materials and fight deforestation, poaching, and international smuggling. Blood diamonds and the ivory trade are just some of the atrocities we are committed to stamping out.
- Campaign for the international abolition of the death penalty and continue our efforts to ensure British made chemicals are not used for executions.
- Increase support for victims of torture.
- Support global anti-corruption and anti-bribery efforts.
- Promote the decriminalisation of homosexuality worldwide, support asylum claims from those fleeing oppressive anti-gay laws and develop a strategy in support of LGBTQ+ rights.
- Spearhead international campaigns against female genital mutilation, forced marriage (particularly child marriage), so-called honour killings, sexual violence in conflict zones, and violence against women and girls.
- Prioritise gender equality as a British foreign policy goal.

- Support freedom of religion worldwide and stand firm against all forms of religious persecution. We will campaign for the global abolition of criminal libel, blasphemy, apostasy, and sedition laws.
- Take action to defend and promote the rights of stateless individuals, and invest in ensuring access to services, legal representation, political and civil rights, and other basic tenets for such individuals. We will consider investments in areas such as digital identity and entrepreneurship to give stateless individuals the chance to place down roots and step up collaborative efforts with international partners to stop individuals falling through the gaps in statehood law and provide a path out for those that do.
- Support the rights of migrant workers worldwide, including by using British government procurement policy, soft power and international development funds to work against those who abuse migrant workers or otherwise engage in unjustifiable working conditions.
- Establish a new Human Rights Ombudsman, funded by government but independent from political pressure, to assess situations and determine if human rights violations and denial of basic capabilities and needs are occurring, on an initially 'nationality-blind' basis to ensure such judgements are not made with fear or favour but instead by impartially assessing the human rights particulars within any given case.

## 8.3 International Development

The Liberal Democrats are unapologetically in favour of international development and are passionately committed to ensuring the UK is a leader in ending global poverty and meeting the Sustainable Development Goals. We favour a combined strategy, of trade, aid and institutional reform. The Liberal Democrats will:

- Maintain our commitment to spending 0.7% of gross national income on international development, in line with the OECD definition. We legislated for this goal and are pleased to see it attract cross-party support.
- Make the positive case for international development aid – both as a moral imperative and as part of a strategy that ensures the world we live in is safe and prosperous for relatively minimal cost.
- Protect and expand global spending on public health measures such as vaccinations, family planning, prevention, medical research, and the elimination of preventable diseases such as TB, HIV and malaria.
- Promote private sector investment in development, including through developing a 'philanthrocapitalism' strategy that enshrines transparency, accountability, and competition and by ensuring companies pay the taxes that they owe. We will increase legal assistance to developing countries in order to ensure they can collect the taxes and fees they are due, that they enjoy strong legal representation in global trade negotiations, and that they can require transparency and accountability from multinational firms without the perils of unilateral action encouraging a race to the bottom.
- Develop a comprehensive strategy to ensure international development aid is used to promote good governance and thwart the influence of multinational terror groups and transnational organised crime.

- Create a civil society partnership scheme to help elements of British civil society – including political parties, trade unions, charities, and community organisations – foster links between rich and poor countries.
- Develop a global education for all strategy.
- Support poorer countries in building resilience against future crises and disasters, recovering from the effects of past ones, and providing generous support whenever a humanitarian emergency occurs.
- Promote greater environmental cooperation, including on issues such as climate change mitigation and adaptation, poor air quality, environmental crimes, ‘tragedies of the commons’, and renewable energy supply for hard to reach areas. We will also help break the grip of petro-dictators by promoting new renewable energy solutions around the world.
- Consult on the creation of a new International Development Bank and a Sustainable Development Goals Corporation, using new rules on capital spending and public corporations to leverage public and private finance and expertise into providing more investment and more assistance for those struggling most in the world today.
- Focus international development projects and diplomatic energies on failed and fragile states.
- Support the cause of international development within global trade negotiations in a manner that addresses the inequities and inefficiencies of the current system, while recognising the economic and political case for free trade as paramount. In order to do this, the Liberal Democrats will:
  - Call for the establishment of an international body within the WTO to enforce and design good contracts, develop fair auction procedures, provide model polluter-pays laws, and ensure the resource curse is not pandemic.
  - Support the establishment of impartial international tribunals to assess the legitimacy of dumping duties and technical and non-tariff barriers to trade, to examine if bilateral trade deals create or divert trade, and to consider the case for imposing duties on countries failing to proportionately make highly polluting companies pay for their pollution.
  - Support efforts to prohibit or restrict tariff escalation, whereby raw materials are traded freely but the value-added products produced by developed nations are traded under substantial tariff protections.
  - Support a “TRIPS minus” whereby developing countries can pursue modified versions of international intellectual property regimes in order to develop the necessary drugs and innovations needed to attend to public health and basic needs, including an expanded use of compulsory licences. To encourage innovation under this new system, we will work with the international community to expand the use of prize and guarantee-fund systems and promote anti-arbitrage measures to ensure compulsory licences are used for their intended purpose. We will push for international agreement prohibiting bio-piracy and recognising the benefits of bio-diversity.
- Within the EU, the Liberal Democrats will:

- o Increase the international development budget within the European Union, using the collective resources and expertise of the EU to embark on projects the individual countries cannot.
- o Support the expansion of the EU 'Everything but Arms' policy, but expanded to include more countries, to include clarification and simplification on country-of-origin rules to ensure developing countries can benefit from complex international supply chains, to include compensation for non-tariff barriers, to review the inclusion of damaging industries such as those that are environmentally unsustainable or have egregious human rights abuses, and to support investment in infrastructure that allows the poorest communities to make the most of export opportunities.
- o Stop CAP practices that put developing world farmers at a competitive disadvantage.
- o Reduce the common Single Market tariffs with the ultimate goal of the managed elimination of all tariffs globally bar those necessary for national security and, in the developing world, infant industry protection.
- o Implement Sustainable Development Goals audits of all policies within the EU that could have repercussions on the achievement of said goals.
- Increase the agility and flexibility of international development spending, at both EU and UK levels, to allow faster responses to natural disasters, humanitarian catastrophes, and public health emergencies.

## **8.4 Britain in Europe**

The United Kingdom's role within the EU gives us more control of our destiny in both regional and global politics, access to markets of hundreds of millions of individuals in both Europe and beyond, and a democratic means of unlocking the benefits of interstate cooperation. The Liberal Democrats understand the immense benefits of the European project, but we are reformers by nature, and this extends to the European Union. The Liberal Democrats will:

- Reform the EU, by:
  - o Working with supporters of the European Union in all parties to deliver a united reform proposal.
  - o Granting the European Parliament the power to submit legislation.
  - o Defending and reasserting the principle of subsidiarity, bringing power to the lowest practical level.
  - o Introducing the right of recall, as passed under the coalition, for MEPs.
  - o Supporting transparency and accountability, and considering options for rationalisation and simplification of European structures.
  - o Strengthening the powers of national parliaments to scrutinise, including by working in a cross-parliamentary way where appropriate, with MPs from various nations forming committees to scrutinise the work done at the European level.
  - o Scrapping the second seat of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, as an easy step to save costs and reduce waste.

- Support efforts to secure EU trade deals that expand markets for UK businesses, provided consumer, employee and environmental standards are upheld and promoted, and that public services such as the NHS are not jeopardised. Being part of the EU means we enjoy a far stronger hand in such negotiations, so will never be forced to compromise on these points.
- Deepen the EU single market in the energy sector, the digital economy and services.
- Continue campaigning for reform of the Common Agricultural and Common Fisheries Policies, as well as external trade rules.
- Cooperate with European governments on issues that face us all, such as:
  - Environmental degradation, by developing the EU Energy Union and setting binding greenhouse gas reduction targets at the EU level.
  - The migrant and refugee crisis, with a focus on fighting human trafficking and fairly distributing the duty to take incoming refugees.
  - Crime and terrorism, including by strengthening EU cybersecurity capabilities and reforming the European Arrest Warrant.
- Support free movement, which brings immeasurable benefits to both Britons and Europeans alike, but reform rules to phase out sending child benefit to children not living with the UK.

We will oppose the reckless calls to call a referendum until the politicians making such calls lay out a clear agenda for what leaving the EU would entail and what new diplomatic and constitutional arrangements they would pursue. So far, they have refused to substantiate what policies they will pursue in the process of leaving the EU, a significant breach of the duty to be upfront with the British people and allow scrutiny of plans and ideas.

## 8.5 Our Defence and Security

The Liberal Democrats believe that, while multilateral cooperation and institutional membership plays a vital role in keeping us safe, we must not forget the invaluable contributions made by the armed forces and security services. These patriots play the central role in protecting us and our allies. The Liberal Democrats will:

- Commit to the NATO target of 2% of GDP spent on defence.
- Maintain a nuclear deterrent but, as part of our commitment to multilateral nuclear disarmament and fiscal responsibility, scale it back and take a step down the nuclear ladder.
- Conduct a Strategic Defence and Security Review, to:
  - Ensure we are investing in the relevant capabilities needed to maintain our security.
  - Incorporate security services, cyber defences, and soft power interventions are incorporated within a Single Security Budget, ensuring that need, rather than traditional departmental siloing, decides how we allocate resources.
  - Ensure we are spending limited resources wisely by maximising the efficacy of procurement policies.
  - Preserve the capability to rapidly deploy expeditionary forces.



- Provide incentives for STEM graduates to become armed forces engineers, invest in cybersecurity and cyberwarfare, and support research and education in fields of knowledge, from languages to economics, that can help us maintain a strong world-class geopolitical expertise.
- Build on pre-existing frameworks for pan-European military cooperation.
- Support peacekeeping efforts under the auspices of the UN, and support training other military forces in fields such as the rule of law and human rights.

Our veterans and service personnel deserve our gratitude and support. The Liberal Democrats will:

- Create a Cabinet-level Ministry of Veterans Affairs, able to develop a strategy to support veterans that calls upon the resources and marshals expertise from all departments.
- Support the Armed Forces Covenant.
- Immediately end any pay restrictions from austerity.
- Increase support for the housing and healthcare needs – especially mental health needs – of service personnel and veterans.
- Bring the Ministry of Defence into line with other landlords by giving it a statutory duty to provide repair and maintenance to the soldiers and service families who live on armed service properties.
- Expand the Career Transition Partnership to provide free higher, further, or vocational education to those who have served in the Armed Services for six years or more.
- Provide reservists more benefits and a greater right to leave from their employers.