



**First deadline
submissions
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Policy Motions

Business, Skills and Higher Education Motions

1. Backing Hospitality for Growth and Jobs

Submitted by

12 Party Members

Conference recognises that:

- I. Hospitality businesses such as pubs, restaurants, cafes and hotels make a hugely significant contribution to our national economy, local economies, and the night-time economy alike.
- II. Beyond their economic significance, hospitality businesses make invaluable social and cultural contributions to our communities, breathing life into our high streets and town centres.
- III. A thriving hospitality sector is vital for boosting economic growth, job creation and people's wellbeing.

Conference notes with concern that:

- A. For years, hospitality businesses have been facing monumental challenges, including workforce shortages, the Coronavirus pandemic, a broken business rates system, the energy crisis and the economic mismanagement of the previous Conservative Government.
- B. The current Government has added to these challenges by introducing an unfair increase to Employer's National Insurance Contributions (NICs), which disproportionately impacts hospitality by raising the NICs rate while also reducing the salary threshold on which it is levied, significantly raising the cost of employing part-time workers.
- C. According to a survey by UK Hospitality, as of June 2025, one-third of responding hospitality businesses are operating at a loss, six in 10 have had to cut jobs, while 63% have had to reduce the hours available to staff.
- D. The Government's business rates changes, which lower the rate of relief for Retail, Hospitality and Leisure firms from 75% to 40% while abolishing the cap limiting support to £110,000 per firm, will effectively see small independent bricks-and-mortar businesses subsidise the profits of large corporate chains, who can claim relief across multiple sites.
- E. In 2016, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) found that ineffective competition in the energy market was adding £500 million a year to SME energy bills, and a lack of effective competition was again confirmed by Ofgem in 2023 – yet this did not result in a market investigation by the CMA.

Conference reaffirms Liberal Democrat commitments to:

- i. Boost small businesses and empower them to create new local jobs, including by abolishing business rates and replacing them with a Commercial Landowner Levy.

- ii. Encouraging businesses, especially SMEs, to invest in training, take up digital technologies and become more energy efficient.
- iii. Replacing the broken apprenticeship levy with a broader and more flexible skills and training levy.

Conference therefore calls on the Government to recognise the importance of hospitality in boosting our economy, creating jobs and supporting local high streets and communities by:

1. Exempting hospitality SMEs from the employer's National Insurance increase.
2. Consulting on the creation of a new employer's National Insurance Contributions band from £5,000 to £9,100 with a lower rate, to lower the cost of employing part-time staff.
3. Ensuring that the upcoming Review of Electricity Market Arrangements (REMA) includes concrete measures to give hospitality businesses access to better and cheaper energy deals.
4. Instructing the CMA to open an investigation into the non-domestic energy market and recommend any appropriate remedies.
5. Urgently correcting the anomaly in its business rates changes to ensure that large chains will not benefit at the expense of small and independent hospitality businesses.
6. Tackling skills shortages in the hospitality sector by speeding up reform of the broken apprenticeship system and empowering Skills England to act as a properly independent body, with employers at its heart.

2. Opportunity and Skills

Submitted by

Federal Policy Committee

Conference believes that:

- i. The “fair, free and open” society that the Liberal Democrats exist to build, can only be achieved against the backdrop of an education system which truly gives everyone, no matter their background, circumstances or stage of life, the opportunity to thrive.
- ii. Currently, education and training provision still fails to give everyone a fair chance to succeed, and especially lets down people who, for a variety of reasons, have not thrived in traditional academic education settings during childhood and early adulthood.
- iii. The UK economy and vital public services are currently hampered by severe skills shortages in a range of sectors; and the failure to address this by successive Governments has limited growth, left the UK less well equipped to transition to a low carbon economy, and squandered the potential of individuals
- iv. The rapid pace of technological change in the workplace, not least the rapid adoption of new AI tools, leaves many employees feeling anxious and uncertain about the future of their professions; heightening the need to offer retraining and upskilling opportunities for people who are mid-career.
- v. Businesses and entrepreneurs should be properly supported to create growth and jobs in every part of the UK, to give the country the financial boost it desperately needs.

Conference believes that people need to be able to access the training needed to turn their innate talent and potential into usable skills; and that policy on skills and training is a cornerstone of opportunity.

Conference notes that:

- I. The UK faces critical skills shortages in sectors such as social care, construction, AI, clean energy, and advanced manufacturing.
- II. Employer investment in training has dropped by 28% per employee since 2005, while further education funding and participation have been in long-term decline.
- III. The Government’s newly created Skills England lacks the operational independence needed to deliver the transformation of skills and training provision, break down of barriers to training opportunities for disadvantaged groups, and proper workforce planning for critical sectors, that are desperately needed to transform the opportunity and skills provision in this country.
- IV. Persistent inequalities limit access to skills training, with adult learners, young carers, care leavers, prisoners, ethnic minorities, socio-economically disadvantaged people, disabled people and parents among the groups who face systemic barriers.

Conference further believe that:

- A. Equipping people with the skills they need is essential to improving economic productivity, addressing labour shortages, and empowering individuals to thrive in a changing world.
- B. The skills system must be locally responsive, nationally coherent, and built around the needs of individuals and employers alike.
- C. The government's duty to support education and training should not stop when an individual turns 21; lifelong learning is essential in an era of rapid technological and economic change, and governments must guarantee access to training and support throughout working lives.

Conference therefore endorses Policy Paper XXX *Opportunity and Skills* and in particular its proposals to:

1. Set the right institutional framework for opportunity and skills in England by:
 - a. Reforming Skills England to establish a truly independent, arms length body, accountable to Parliament and supported by regional and sectoral partners, with a specific remit to to enable growth and opportunity, understand the nation's skills needs and improve the skills offer, tackle discrimination in access to skills, forecast future workforce needs in essential sectors, and guide investment.
 - b. Requiring regions to produce Workforce Development Plans aligned with industrial strategy, devolve skills funding to Mayoral Combined Authorities (MCAs) and county partnerships, within a national framework of performance and quality assurance.
2. Boost the funds available for Further Education in England by:
 - a. Introducing a £10,000 Lifelong Training Grant for every adult, disbursed in tranches at ages 25 (£4,000), 40 (£3,000), and 55 (£3,000), with clear guidance to support its use for re-skilling and career transitions.
 - b. Allowing FE colleges to reclaim VAT, to put them on a level playing field with Sixth Form Colleges.
 - c. Extending the Pupil Premium to post-16 FE learners to support young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to stay in education and training.
 - d. In the long run, equalising per-student funding in FE with school sixth forms.
3. Incentivise and improve training in the workforce by:
 - a. Transforming the Apprenticeship Levy into a Skills and Training Account model which would empower employers and individuals to fund training, and make it more accessible to small- and medium-sized employers.
 - b. Boosting the take-up of apprenticeships by guaranteeing they are paid at least the National Minimum Wage through scrapping the lower apprentice rate
 - c. Introducing Skills Tax Credits, with enhanced relief for priority sectors.
 - d. Establishing Skills Cooperatives of SMEs to pool training resources and rotate apprentices between member businesses.
 - e. Enabling funding of accredited micro-credentials and modular learning to increase flexibility and participation.

- f. Guaranteeing AI training for all public sector workers, ensuring confidence in the use of emerging technologies.
4. Strengthen the Uptake of Vocational Qualifications by:
 - a. Supporting BTECs and reform T-levels into modular formats with flexible industry placements.
 - b. Implementing reforms to bring more technical education into mainstream schools.
 5. Improve the support and guidance available to learners at all levels by:
 - a. Making careers guidance a statutory part of the curriculum from primary school onwards.
 - b. Strengthening the National Careers Service's adult offer and face-to-face capacity including ensuring provision in community settings, so it is easily available for people not currently in full time education
 - c. Supporting voluntary mentoring schemes in places of work.
 6. Take steps to tackle barriers faced by specific groups including:
 - a. Extending the Childcare Grant currently available to low-income HE students to all full-time students undertaking eligible courses regardless of level.
 - b. Give parents on full-time courses access to equal support with childcare costs as is available to working parents, offering them an additional 15 hours free childcare for 3- and 4-year-olds for 38 weeks of the year.
 - c. Speeding up the process to recognise asylum seekers and refugee's existing qualifications where possible, so they can use their existing skills here in the UK.
 - d. Expanding the Pupil Premium to include extra funding for young carers, and exempt young adult carers from the "21-hour rule" that currently prevents them from claiming Carer's Allowance if they study for more than 21 hours per week.
 - e. Improving the provision of training, education and work opportunities in prisons.
 - f. Make care experience a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010 to strengthen the rights of people who are in or have been in care to receive training.

Communities and Local Government Motions

1. Ending Fleecehold and the Great Property Rip Off

Submitted by

22 Party Members

Conference notes that:

A. Liberal Democrats and Liberals have long called for leasehold reform, since Lloyd George introduced the people's budget in 1909.

B. England, Wales and Australia are the only countries still operating leaseholds.

C. A fifth of England's housing stock is leasehold - 4.8 million properties.

D. The Conservatives' Leasehold and Freehold Reform Act has failed to deliver meaningful change in the housing sector.

E. Labour's delayed leasehold reforms will ban new leaseholds while offering no way out for the millions of existing leaseholders.

F. A YouGov survey in 2017 showed 51% of new homeowners reporting major defects.

G. Research in 2022 showed the average new build home comes with 157 defects, up 96% since 2005, and with 94% reporting at least one defect.

H. The Financial Ombudsman reported in 2024 that complaints about Building Insurance claims had increased over 10 years to a record high

I. Despite government promises to legislate, there are still no proposals to regulate the property management sector.

J. It has been more than 8 years since the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower and many high rise buildings remain without safe cladding.

K. The Building Safety Regulator has been mired in delays in doing its proper work.

Conference believes:

a) The cladding scandal proves that the leasehold model demonstrably fails to ensure tenant safety.

b) Many existing leaseholders still pay soaring ground rents and need to be freed from them, and from unfair service charges levied by unregulated property agents.

c) A national oversight body is required to ensure implementation of the Grenfell Inquiry Report recommendations.

d) The scandal of developers leaving serious defects unresolved must be urgently confronted.

e) Building Safety Regulator delays must be addressed.

f) Too many rogue developers and unregulated estate management companies force residents to pay over the odds to maintain shared roadways and public spaces within developments.

g) The property management sector should be professionalised and regulated.

Conference reaffirms our commitment to:

I. Abolish leasehold tenures for all properties, including flats.

II. Cap all ground rents on commonhold and commercial leaseholds to a nominal fee.

III. Remove dangerous cladding from all buildings, while ensuring that leaseholders do not have to pay a penny towards it.

Conference resolves to:

1. Regulate the construction industry by:

(a) establishing rights for homebuyers, to ensure there is no way for developers or building insurers to avoid accountability for rectifying defects; and

(b) strengthening accountability to prevent reckless sign-off by building inspectors.

2. Regulate the property management sector by:

(a) Taking forward recommendations from the independent Lord Best report, including a new property regulator responsible for establishing:

(i) a code of practice for and licensing of property managers and agents

(ii) minimum qualifications for property agencies, managers and agents

(iii) standard industry cost codes for leaseholders and freeholders, and the power to block a landlord's chosen managing agent where the leaseholders have reasonably exercised a veto

standardised guidance to improve transparency about what charges cover

(iv) Capping unreasonable service and estate management charges paid by residents and urgently abolishing ground rents for existing residential leases.

(b) Enabling leaseholders to request alternative quotes for maintenance, where the freeholder is a local authority.

(c) Giving residents the power to act in common to take on ownership of management companies and common areas.

(d) Mandating management companies to hold AGMs and respond to residents' correspondence in a timely way.

3. Strengthen local authorities' power to:

(a) adopt shared roadways and public spaces to prevent residents paying for the upkeep of expensive assets through estate management fees, recouping the cost of their completion from the developer or landowner;

(b) sanction developers who fail to complete roads and other infrastructure; and

(c) enforce private landlords' and management companies' obligations to remediate."

2. A Positive vision for social housing

Submitted by

17 Party Members

Conference notes that:

- I. Millions of people are struggling to find affordable, safe, good quality housing.
- II. Too many social homes are in disrepair, with damp and black mould a particular concern.
- III. A positive vision for managing social housing well and treating tenants with dignity is desperately needed.
- IV. There are around 4.5m social rented homes in England , with ownership split between local authorities (40%) and housing associations, (60%)
- V. Whilst councils have the responsibility for maintaining the social homes which they own, they are often under-resourced.
- VII. The Liberal Democrats have an ambitious national house building target of 380,000 homes per year with an equally ambitious social housing target of 150,000 per year but we also need ensure that existing social housing is maintained to a good standard and retrofitted for energy efficiency and affordability.

Conference believes:

- 1. Safe, secure, and affordable housing is fundamental for a fair society. It provides the freedom for individuals to live their best life and make the most out of their goals and talents.
- 2. A fair housing system needs proper funding, which the Conservative government failed to provide and the new Labour Government shows no sign of doing . But councils and housing associations must also do better to improve housing management and tenants' lives.
- 3. People living in social housing have the right to safe, quality accommodation, free from damp and mould. Housing associations, Conservative and Labour administrations are failing council tenants through poor repairs and maintenance, poor energy efficiency and terrible customer service.
- 4. The government should also permanently extend the 100% retention of Right to Buy receipts so Councils can build more Council homes and use the receipts to repair

existing homes

5. Homes, existing and yet to be built, should be as environmentally-friendly as possible; therefore saving residents money on energy bills and reducing energy waste from our homes.

Conference calls for:

A. The development of a positive liberal housing offer focused on building genuinely affordable homes and guaranteeing minimum service levels for Council and all social tenants.

B. The Government to establish, together with the LGA , a Housing Working Group to fulfil this objective, consider options to contribute to national policy development to include reviewing how Councils without Housing Revenue Accounts can start to build social housing and allow cooperatives to build new homes

C. The strengthening and re-establishment of tenants and residents associations, empowering them to take decisions about their estates.

D. New measures to ensure private developers meet affordable housing targets, and not shy away from taking enforcement action where necessary.

E. The creation of a central government grant for local councils, which would be apportioned based on their need to maintain and retrofit properties.

F. A Tenant and Leaseholder Charter to be put into legislation which guarantees the right to timely repairs of properties and communal areas, requiring councils and local housing associations to review their current stock and invest in these homes to ensure that residents are not exposed to mould and damp; have excellent safety measures and that repairs are carried out promptly.

H. Council leaseholders to be allowed to arrange sinking funds to put aside money for future works, as private leaseholders are able to do.

I. Councils and housing associations to commit to using funds from central government and where possible their housing revenue accounts to invest in bringing existing council homes up to a good standard, including, retrofitting properties in order to reduce energy bills and protect the environment.

J. The government to amend the Landlord and Tenant Act of 1985 so that Major Works

(Section 20) Notices are delivered a minimum of three months before work is proposed to start, so that those affected are consulted with sufficient time to put in place appropriate arrangements.

K. Freedom of Information legislation to be extended to Housing Associations

I. The implementation of “Awaab's Law” , also known as Clause 42 of the Social Housing (Regulation) Act 2023 by the end of 2026.

3. English Devolution

Submitted by

SAO: ALDC

Applicability: England only

Conference notes:

I. The Government's programme to reorganise local government.

II. Local Government in England remains massively underfunded.

III. That the savings created by moving to unitary councils are minimal and considerably outweighed by the cost pressures faced by local government.

IV. That Sarah Olney's ten-minute rule bill to introduce proportional representation for general and local elections was passed on 3 December 2024 by 138 votes to 136.

V. Proportional representation in local elections is established in Scotland and Northern Ireland and is now an option in Wales. Only England is made to cling to using first past the post in local elections.

VI. In May 2025 a council seat was won on only 18.9% of the vote.

VII. That the work carried out by Lib Dem Councillors on behalf of their communities is very much appreciated by the party, including those councillors who are affected by local government re-organisation.

Conference believes:

A. That as a basic principle of supporting local democracy, local government reorganisation should only take place when there is full consultation with existing structures and when local consensus is reached.

B. That true devolution requires the transfer of substantive powers down from government and not up from local authorities.

C. That local government is best, and most representative, when it is carried out as close to the people as possible.

D. Having fewer councillors does not in itself mean better local government.

E. That reducing the number of councillors representing an area risks poorer levels of service that residents receive while putting unnecessary levels of strain on the remaining councillors.

Conference also believes:

1. The Labour Government's expenditure settlement leaves local government still grossly underfunded.

2. Local Government Reorganisation will not solve the funding gap in the councils involved.

Conference further believes:

1. If reorganisation does take place, it is the opportunity for local electoral reform.
2. That the election of councillors by proportional representation will produce more representative, responsive councils and end 'one-party' states;
3. That local government elections in England should be carried out using STV in multi member wards, which has proven successful in Scotland and North Ireland.
4. That elections for single posts should be by AV

Conference reaffirms the party's commitment to

- i) Strengthening the powers of local authorities and scrapping Police and Crime Commissioners and returning oversight to local authorities as set out in Power for People and Communities (2018).
- ii) A federal structure for the UK including England drawing down powers from Whitehall as set out in conference motion A Framework for England in A Federal UK (2021)

Conference resolves to:

1. Campaign for electoral reform as part of English Local Government Re-organisation;
2. Continue to campaign for accountable, democratic devolution within in England, as part of a Federal UK structure;
3. Campaign a for sustainable, long-term funding solution for local government in England;
4. Support the LGA's 'Make It Local' campaign, which outlines how local government is key to delivering solutions to the biggest issues for the public;
5. Support policies to build a consensus on long-term funding of social care.

4. The Planning and Infrastructure Bill

Submitted by

SAO: ALDC

Applicability: England only

Conference notes that:

I. The Town and Country Planning Act 1947 created the modern planning system and has delivered significant benefits to England since its introduction.

II. The Government's Planning and Infrastructure Bill, alongside their plans for regional mayors in England, would deliver a fundamental reduction in local democratic control of the planning process.

III. The process of local government re-organisation may take planning decisions further away from the local communities they impact.

IV. The Liberal Democrat Policy Paper 155 Tackling the Housing Crisis proposed solutions for tackling the housing shortage and advancing action on climate change while protecting local democratic control of planning.

V. The crisis in providing high quality social housing and affordable new homes.

VI. The impact of the Land Compensation Act 1961 on the cost of land for development.

Conference welcomes:

A. The proposal for local planning authorities to be able to set their own fees.

B. The proposed reforms to the electricity grid connection process, which will allow renewable energy schemes to proceed faster.

C. The proposed consumer benefits schemes for households living close to transmission infrastructure.

Conference believes that:

i. Local councils and councillors are best placed to understand the planning needs of and pressures on their areas.

ii. The role of councillors in delivering democratic decision making is fundamental to the planning system.

iii. The proposal to increase the delegation of decision making to officers undermines the democratic principle which underlies the planning system.

iv. New burdens should not be placed on councils without the appropriate additional funding being provided by the government.

Conference further believes that:

1. Communities hosting energy and transmission projects should see a real, fair local benefit from them.

Conference reaffirms the party's commitment to:

a. The planning reforms proposed in 'Tackling the Housing Crisis'.

Conference resolves to:

i. Oppose the increase in delegated powers to officers on planning.

ii. Campaign for the reform of the Land Compensation Act so public infrastructure and housing can be delivered at a fair price.

iii. Campaign to give councils the power to mandate that public land is developed for social housing only.

Culture, Media, Digital and Sport Motions

1. Fixing the Church Roof: Save the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme

Submitted by

12 Party Members

Conference notes that:

I. The Labour Government's decision to cap at £25,000 the VAT relief available to projects under the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme will leave hundreds of essential repair and restoration projects facing unsustainable costs.

II. The Government's failure to confirm funding for the scheme beyond March 2026 has deprived those essential projects of the certainty they need for success.

III. The previous Conservative Government decided to scrap the Listed Places of Worship Roof Repair Fund in 2017.

IV. Liberal Democrat ministers played a key role in instituting the Listed Places of Worship Roof Repair Fund in 2014, while funding for the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme was increased to £42m while Liberal Democrats were in Government.

V. Listed Places of Worship include thousands of churches, synagogues, mosques and temples across the UK, and a failure to renew the scheme would put many hundreds of these historic sites at risk.

Conference further notes that:

A. Kemi Badenoch, the Leader of the Conservative Party, in February 2025 stated that "a typical Liberal Democrat will be somebody who is good at fixing their church roof".

B. These comments were followed in May 2025 by a set of local elections where the Conservative Party lost almost 700 council seats, while the Liberal Democrats won hundreds of seats and gained control of three councils.

C. The Liberal Democrats now run more councils than the Conservative party, underlining our commitment to getting the very best deal for local areas - including the maintenance of church roofs.

Conference believes:

i. Historic places of worship are icons of the British landscape, and play a vital role at the heart of local communities across the United Kingdom.

ii. Schemes such as the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme and the Listed Places of Worship Roof Repair Fund are essential tools to help protect the built heritage of the United Kingdom, and to support communities to protect the built heritage of their locality.

iii. The Liberal Democrats' community-based campaigning means we are uniquely placed to champion local heritage, including Listed Places of Worship.

iv. Community-based campaigning has not just been central to every Liberal Democrat success, but can be a crucial antidote to the cynical politics of populist parties like Reform UK.

v. Liberal Democrats should take great pride in being committed to fixing church roofs.

Conference therefore calls on the Government to:

1. Remove the cap on VAT relief available under the Listed Places of Worship Grant Scheme and restore funding for the scheme to its previous level.
2. Commit to funding the scheme in future years, beyond March 2026.
3. Reinststate the Listed Places of Worship Roof Repair Fund.

2. Freedom from Harm: Gambling as a Public Health Issue

Submitted by

12 Party Members

Conference notes with concern that:

1. As many as 2.5% of the adult British population suffer from problem gambling and a further 11.5% see lower levels of harm or elevated risk.
2. Children can also experience by gambling harms, with an estimated up to 1.5% of 11 to 17-year-olds affected.
3. With an estimated one gambling-related suicide a day, gambling is now determined to be one of six key risk factors for suicide in the National Suicide Prevention Strategy.
4. For each individual with a gambling problem, many others are harmed by family breakdown, crime, loss of employment, loss of homes and ultimately, loss of life.
5. Up to 3.6 million adults are negatively impacted by someone else's gambling and there are 1.7 million children growing up in households where an adult is experiencing gambling problems.
6. The Department of Health estimates that gambling costs the Government and society between £1.05 billion and £1.77 billion a year.
7. The government has explicitly said it wishes to see the gambling sector grow, which runs counter to a public health approach to gambling.

Conference further notes:

1. The 2023 Gambling White Paper acknowledged the need for a public health approach and made several welcome recommendations to reduce gambling harm, but many have not been implemented.
2. Analysis by the Social Market Foundation shows that doubling the rate of Remote Gaming Duty, charged on online gambling profits, would raise between £575 million and £900 million a year, depending on the preventative effect of the higher rate.
3. Research shows gambling advertising and marketing leads people to start gambling, those who are gambling to gamble more and those who have stopped gambling to start again.
4. The World Health Organisation and the three leading public health institutions in the UK – RSPH, ADPH, and FPH – recommend ending gambling advertising. Many countries have already done so or have severely restricted it.
5. There is significant public support for measures to curtail gambling advertising and marketing.
6. Self-regulation of gambling advertising codes has failed to protect the public.

7. Essential affordability checks and data sharing between operators remain undelivered, meaning proper safeguarding cannot take place.
8. No substantive progress has been made to deliver a Gambling Ombudsman, as set out in the 2023 Gambling White Paper to be established and operational within 12 months.
9. Local authorities face significant constraints when seeking to challenge the opening of new gambling venues due to outdated licensing frameworks
10. There has been no attempt to effectively regulate “loot boxes”, despite their similarity to gambling and their links to harm and continued failings by the game industry to uphold self-regulatory principles

Conference welcomes:

1. The introduction of a statutory levy on all gambling operators to help fund research, prevention and treatment of gambling harm.
2. The introduction of measures to bring stakes and prizes for online gambling more in line with those for land-based gambling.

Conference calls on the UK Government to:

1. Enact population-wide public health policies, putting the promotion of the public’s health at the centre of all gambling regulation.
2. Create a statutory, independent Gambling Ombudsman with real power to protect consumers and resolve complaints.
3. Ensure robust regulation of the gambling industry and gambling products,
including by strengthening the independence of the regulator and by ensuring that the primary objective of the regulator is to protect the public.
4. Take action to curb the impact of gambling advertising, marketing, and sponsorship, including by ending inducements, direct marketing and
gambling marketing and sponsorship at sports events; and by ending pre-watershed gambling advertising.
5. Introduce clear and enforceable restrictions on content marketing, particularly on social media.
6. Replace the current self regulation of gambling advertising with independent and enforceable regulation.
7. Review whether further measures to restrict gambling advertising are necessary.
8. Enforce affordability checks by mandating financial checks and data sharing to stop gambling beyond means.
9. Level the playing field on licensing by giving local councils the same powers over gambling venues as they have over pubs.

10. Regulate 'loot boxes' as gambling, with strict age limits and full regulation.
11. Increase remote gaming duty from 21% to 42%.

Crime and Justice Motions

1. Improving Access to Justice

Submitted by

14 Party Members

Conference believes that:

- I. Equal access to justice for all is a fundamental right in any democratic society.
- II. Legal aid is a proud cornerstone of the British criminal justice system and should be available to everyone who needs it.
- III. Being denied access to justice can further exacerbate inequalities facing the most vulnerable in our society.
- IV. Reaching a fair resolution at the earliest possible stage of any legal dispute is in the best interests of all.

Conference notes with grave concern that under the former Conservative government, years of cuts and mismanagement has damaged communities' access to both civil and criminal legal aid.

Conference further notes that:

- A. Cuts to legal aid have damaged access to justice and increased the number of unrepresented litigants.
- B. The number of legal aid deserts - areas with no access to legal aid providers - across the country are on the rise, with rural and coastal communities particularly impacted.
- C. More than 42 million people in England and Wales are denied access to a community care legal aid provider in their area, accounting for nearly 70% of the population.
- D. Legal aid providers are increasingly forced to close as legal aid fees are not sufficient to meet their working costs, with 82% of housing and family legal aid providers reporting that civil legal aid work is loss-making.
- E. The legal aid means test has not been updated in line with inflation since 2009, despite the cost of living crisis - leaving thousands without affordable access to justice.
- F. In 2022, the Legal Aid Means Test Review recommended to significantly increase thresholds for legal aid eligibility and remove the means test entirely for some civil cases to improve equal access to justice - but the Government has delayed its implementation until 2026.
- G. A lack of legal aid is further exacerbating court backlogs, with estimates showing that hearings involving unrepresented litigants last 50% longer.
- H. Despite the role that early legal advice can play in diverting cases away from the courts, saving public money and improving outcomes, its availability through legal aid is plummeting.
- I. Since 2015, 94 courts and tribunals have been closed throughout England and Wales.

J. A long-awaited fee increase was secured for criminal legal aid last year, following the 2021 Bellamy Report which recommended an immediate funding uplift as “the minimum necessary... first step in nursing the system of criminal legal aid back to health after years of neglect”.

K. Too many survivors and victims of domestic abuse are being left without the support they need in the justice system, with 29% of survivors representing themselves in 2023 compared to 15% in 2011.

Conference acknowledges that increasing spending on legal aid will ultimately save money, with numerous studies showing that early access to legal advice can help tackle problems before they escalate, improve outcomes and prevent cases from going to court unnecessarily.

Conference therefore calls on the Government to:

1. Establish a new right to affordable, reasonable legal assistance with a new, independent Justice Commission to monitor and enforce it.
2. Make the legal aid system simpler and more generous for both civil and criminal cases by:
 - a. Immediately implementing the recommendations of the Legal Aid Means Test Review;
 - b. Placing a duty on ministers to ensure equal access to justice for all regardless of their community's location, addressing legal aid deserts as a priority.
3. Prioritise solving legal problems before they escalate - improving outcomes and saving public money in the long-run - by:
 - a. Reintroducing legal aid for early legal advice for both civil and criminal cases, with a particular focus on family and housing cases;
 - b. Improving access to mediation through legal aid, especially for family cases.
 - c. Providing funding to local authorities and the Legal Aid Agency to roll out ‘Law Start Centres’ in every community that bring together early legal advice and signposting services for other local legal aid providers to ensure people get the early support they deserve.
4. Develop and implement an access to justice data strategy to allow for a better assessment of legal aid schemes’ efficiencies and effectiveness.
5. Work with legal aid providers and the Legal Aid Agency to determine what administrative tasks are using disproportionate amounts of providers’ time and how those processes could be streamlined to improve efficiency, including by exploring the potential benefits of incorporating the use of new technologies.
6. Reform the Exceptional Case Funding scheme for legal aid, including simplifying the application process, to ensure that no one is prevented from enforcing their human rights by a lack of funds.
7. Bring forward a plan to increase access to community court buildings, including by restoring existing ones where possible."

2. Policing Fit for the Future

Submitted by

14 Party Members

Conference notes:

- A. More than two million crimes went unsolved across England and Wales in 2024.
- B. Backlogs across the police and criminal justice systems - from courts to forensics - are preventing victims from getting the justice they deserve and letting criminals walk free.
- C. Prolific offenders with 16 or more convictions make up about a tenth of all offenders but are responsible for nearly half of all custodial sentences handed down by the courts, highlighting the pressing need to reduce reoffending.
- D. Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is a national emergency with one in four women having experienced domestic abuse and a woman killed by a man once every three days.
- E. More than 27,000 suspected drug suppliers are currently on bail or released pending investigation, with forensic delays playing a significant role in these delays.
- F. Years of ineffective resourcing and mismanagement has left our policing service unable to meet the complex needs of the communities they serve.

Conference believes that:

- I. Everyone deserves to feel safe in their own home and walking down their own streets.
- II. Policing interacts with other public services on a daily basis, including the criminal justice system, healthcare and child protection services - all of which need to be functioning properly to keep our communities safe from crime.
- III. Public trust in the police is essential for policing by consent, which requires keeping our communities safe while ensuring everyone's fundamental rights are respected.

Conference therefore supports the following policies to ensure the effective policing our communities deserve, taken from the Spokesperson's paper, *Policing Fit for the Future*:

- 1. Establishing a more joined-up approach between police and other parts of the criminal justice system by creating a secure and confidential 'data bubble' between police and prosecutors to improve efficient information sharing.
- 2. Tackling the courts backlog, reducing reoffending and preventing crimes of all kinds, including serious and organised crime, from being committed in the first place, including by:
 - a) Expanding specialist courts that steer repeat offenders towards rehabilitation, including intensive engagement with probation officers and drug counsellors;
 - b) Reviewing which offences can go to the magistrates' courts instead of crown court;
 - c) Creating a National Diversion Framework to keep people out of the criminal justice system, drawing on experience in the West Midlands;

- d) Making youth diversion a statutory duty for young people up to the age of 25;
 - e) Expanding specialist county lines taskforces across the UK;
 - f) Improving international cooperation to tackle cross-border drug trafficking, including a stronger leadership role for the UK in Europol.
 - g) Updating training on modern slavery, child trafficking and spotting signs of child criminal exploitation (CCE).
3. Enabling police forces to effectively respond to violence against women and girls (VAWG), including by:
- a) Providing sustainable funding for support services for survivors of VAWG and domestic abuse;
 - b) Addressing honour-based abuse, including by developing a statutory definition, better support services, and training that enables police, social care and education professionals to effectively recognise and respond;
 - c) Expanding the provision of high-quality perpetrator programmes in domestic abuse cases, with the aim of preventing further abuse.
4. Enabling police forces to treat rural crime with the seriousness it deserves, including by:
- a) Embedding properly-funded dedicated rural crime teams or specialists in every police force;
 - b) Extending the Equipment Theft (Prevention) Act 2023 to include GPS theft;
 - c) Enforcing stricter penalties for livestock-related offences and for fly-tipping;
 - d) Implementing training for police and 999 control room staff to better understand rural crime;
 - e) Ensuring everyone has access to a community police counter, based where the public already goes such as in supermarkets and railway stations.
5. Ensuring police forces have the technology they need to prevent and solve crime, including by:
- a) Improving regional cooperation between police forces on technology procurement processes;
 - b) Introducing regulations to enable the more effective use of police drones in rural areas, adopting an intelligence-led 'beyond the line of sight' model with strict safeguards;
 - c) Expanding regional and national coordination of forensic services to address backlogs;
 - d) Strengthening the role of the Office of the Biometrics and Surveillance Camera Commissioner (OBSCC) to oversee the impact of emerging technology such as facial recognition and its impact on civil liberties;
 - e) Ensure police forces have the specialist officers and staff they need to effectively tackle different types of crime, including by:

- i) Allowing forces to start a recruitment drive for the specialist skills they need, such as digital forensic experts;
- ii) Urgently drawing up a national recruitment, training and retention strategy to tackle the shortage of detectives;
- iii) Improving training opportunities for officers.

6. Rebuilding trust in policing and ensure high standards are maintained, including by:

- a) Introducing mandatory national vetting standards for police officers, including automatic dismissal for those who fail vetting or are convicted of serious criminal offences;
- b) Regularly publishing data on the number of officers under investigation for sexual or domestic abuse who are still on normal duties;
- c) Preventing further abuse by removing warrant cards from any officer being investigated for offences related to VAWG and domestic abuse;
- d) Ensuring every allegation of police-perpetrated domestic abuse is automatically referred to the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC);
- e) Guaranteeing universal access for police officers to ongoing clinical mental health support at work, and equipping frontline supervisors to better recognise signs of trauma and support their workforce;
- f) Improving the collection and use of religion and ethnicity information in police data to help improve policing outcomes and restore public trust.

Economy and Tax Motions

1. A Fair Council Tax

Submitted by

SAO: ALTER (Action for Land Taxation & Economic Reform)

Background information: This England only motion calls for the Lib Dems to commit to replacing the Council Tax with a fairer, more proportional levy. It argues that Council Tax is both discredited and dysfunctional, penalising the asset-poor far more than the asset-rich, with costly collection and expensive exemptions that promote perverse social consequences.

The motion's proposed reform of Council Tax in two simple stages is logically consistent with our party's policy for reforming Business Rates into a Commercial Landowner Levy (CLL), with a land value-based outcome that delivers similar benefits – notably by removing disincentives to investment in property improvement. Tax varying powers on housing-approved land and on additional or empty homes is also locally devolved.

At a revenue-neutral rate (c.0.5% of capital value) our proposed replacement potentially creates 3 times more winners than losers, capping increased charges at £1200 a year - with anyone affected able to defer some or all of a higher bill. Reference is also made to a fair distribution of tax revenues, equalising local/regional house-price distortions – plus a longer-term aim to replace Stamp Duty Land Tax and, by raising thresholds, cut Inheritance Tax as well.

The full motion text (499 words) follows:

A FAIR COUNCIL TAX

Conference notes:

A. The 1991 valuation basis for Council Tax (CT) is 34 years out-of-date, with wealthy homeowners and the owners of multiple properties gaining most from taxation that falls hardest on the young, on low-earners and on homeowners in deprived locations.

B. The relation of CT to property value is weak, with Band A owners paying proportionately more than those in Band H – so £100,000 homeowners can pay 5 times more as a share of value than multi-million pound property owners.

C. Modern automated property revaluations for tax purposes (as done in Northern Ireland for their 2010 rating revaluation and necessary for our 2018 policy on Business Rates reform) involves separating land from buildings – whether the tax applies to total property value or land value alone.

Conference reaffirms Liberal Democrat commitments to:

- i) Fair and progressive taxation to sustain the services that support society.
- ii) Switch taxes from work to wealth so tax burdens don't disproportionately impact productive activity.
- iii) Improve tax revenues by cutting the evasion and avoidance opportunities available to the better-off.
- iv) Boost growth by replacing Business Rates with a land value-based Commercial Landowner Levy (CLL).

Conference therefore calls for:

1. Revaluation of all residential property as soon as possible, expedited by new technological methods and with annual revaluations thereafter to ensure that changes in property values are subject to fair taxation.
2. Replacement of CT by a fairer, proportional Capital Value Tax (CVT) as a percentage of value, with local authority discretion to set a higher percentage rate on vacant residences, second homes and development permitted land, incentivising home building instead of land banking, while cutting tax for most households.
3. Transitional increase limits of £100 a month for primary residences (such protections ending at transfer), with appeal via the Valuation Agency Office as now, and full deferral for those unable to pay, allowing CVT at modest interest to be paid later or at transfer – helping cut the council debt issues that have blighted CT.
4. Removal of all other reliefs or exemptions, including for single occupants, empty properties and second homes, which complicate the system and increase unintended outcomes, like overcrowded family housing.
5. Liability for CVT to reflect international practice and rest not with tenants but owners (who exclusively gain from rising property values, so are more able to pay) – reducing local authority collection costs, since there are fewer multiple-property owners than there are individual homes.
6. Detailed consideration of CVT alignment with our Business Rates reform, migrating to a land value basis only – a Land Value Tax (LVT) – with bills shifting gradually and deferral options maintained, thus recycling the value created by public investment and rewarding the value added by property improvement.
7. Equalisation of CVT/LVT revenues through fair, redistributive funding formulae – using the higher returns from efficient collection of an unavoidable tax to fund the scrapping of Stamp Duty Land Tax (a deadweight property sales tax and barrier to growth) and cut Inheritance Tax by raising thresholds over the longer-term.

2. Proportional Property Tax and National Council Tax Benefit Scheme

Submitted by

Local Party: Basingstoke and Deane

Conference notes:

A. The 1991 property valuations on which Council Tax is based are well over thirty years out-of-date, with wealthy homeowners and the owners of multiple properties gaining most from a local tax system that falls heaviest on the young, on low-earners and on those owning modest homes in less prosperous locations.

B. The relation of Council Tax to property value is weak, with homes in each band attracting the same rate, and owners in Band A paying proportionately more than those in the top band, meaning the owner of a £100,000 home can pay around five times more as a share of value than a £1 million-plus property owner.

C. Property values have soared and Council Tax bills have increased, but average incomes have stalled, so the amounts of disposable household income spent on Council Tax currently vary between 0.8% and 4.5%, with people in the North-East and South-West paying the most, while London homeowners pay the least.

D. The National Council Tax Benefit scheme was abolished and replaced by local Council Tax Reduction Schemes from 2013. This means that councils no longer have to provide full Council Tax relief for working-age adults who receive means-tested benefits and are not in work.

E. By 2018/19 only 36 local authorities out of 326 had local Council Tax Support schemes which matched the national Council Tax Benefit scheme which was abolished in 2013. 215 councils had reduced or removed the second adult rebate. This also applies to homeowners not on a low income if they share their home with someone on a low income. Around a third of councils (110) had introduced a band cap. This limits the amount of benefit received in higher value properties to the amount provided to those in lower value properties. The most common band cap applied is D. 70 councils had a minimum Council Tax Support (CTS) entitlement. For example, a minimum CTS entitlement of £5 per week would mean that claimants entitled to less than this would receive nothing. By 2017/18 (the last year figures are available for) 277 local authorities have minimum payments for those receiving out of work benefits.

F. In the first five years of the changes, two million families had been adversely affected by the change from Council Tax Benefit. On average these families had to pay £191 additional Council Tax in 2017/18 (last year figures are available for) in comparison to what they would have paid under Council Tax Benefit. More people are affected by this change than by the two-child benefit limit.

G. During the Covid crisis the Government provided £500 million in extra funding for councils to provide Council Tax support. In the accompanying guidance, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) said it had a “strong expectation” that billing authorities would provide all recipients of working age local Council Tax support with a further reduction in their annual Council Tax bill of £150. Potentially this would have reduced their liability to nil.

H. Most local Council Tax Reduction schemes still provide less than full relief of the Council Tax bill for working-age adults who receive means-tested benefits and are not in work.

Conference believes that

I There should be just and progressive taxation to sustain the services that support our society

II Taxpayers should get genuine value for money by narrowing the tax gap and restoring fiscal responsibility.

III Working-age adults who receive means-tested benefits and are not in work should receive the full amount of relief for their Council Tax bills, in the same way as pensioners on the requisite low income do.

Conference re-affirms its policy to make the taxation of residential property fairer by immediately introducing additional higher bands to make Council Tax more progressive.

Conference calls for the:

- 1) Scrapping of local Council Tax Reduction Schemes;
- 2) Restoration of the National Council Tax Benefit scheme funded nationally, so that working-age adults can receive the level of support they had before the abolition in 2013 of the National Council Tax Benefit scheme.
- 3) Replacement of Council Tax with a fairer, revenue-neutral simple percentage-based property tax based on up-to-date valuations, as is the case in most other developed economies, to be paid by the owners of the home.
- 4) Provision of generous transitional arrangements to limit the extent of the increases including increasing the Local Housing Allowance to cover any increase in rents that may arise.
- 5) Property tax to include some provision for fund transfers to those council areas with the lowest property values.

Explanatory Notes

1 More people are affected by the Council Tax Benefit change than by the two-child benefit limit.

2 In 2016 we accepted the policy paper “Mending the Safety Net” and in 2019 we accepted the policy paper “A Fairer Share for All”. Neither paper included anything on the benefits available with regard to Council Tax. In my submission to the A Fairer Share for All Working Group I called for this benefit to be reformed as part of that policy paper. When we accepted the “Fairer Society” policy paper it also didn’t include anything on the benefits available with regard to Council Tax. It seems that Council Tax has only been discussed in terms of its

reform. The benefits people receive to help them pay their Council Tax has not been discussed by Conference since the reforms were introduced in 2013.

3 At earlier Conferences I have been informed that FCC felt that the issue of scrapping Council Tax Reduction Schemes should be picked up by the Fairer Society motion which was selected for debate at those Conferences. I submitted it as an amendment to the Fairer Society motion, but it wasn't selected for debate.

4 I have not been able to find any current figures on the effects of the 2012 reform of Council Tax Benefit. The figures in Conference Notes are from the House of Commons briefings of June 2017 and August 2020 quoting what research has been carried out on the effects of the change. This change is still in effect but no-one seems to be interested in how it has affected millions of families. Here is the link to the latest House of Commons briefing I have used:

<https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/sn06672/>

5 In Conference Notes 4 it would seem that councils were being told by central government to provide extra money (£150) so those of working-age on benefits would not have to pay any Council Tax during the Covid crisis. I have looked at some current Council Tax Reduction Schemes and they still state that those of working-age with no income other than benefits would have to pay something towards their Council Tax. My own Council – Basingstoke and Deane - is one of the few councils which still provides benefit at 100% of the Council Tax for people of working-age whose only income is benefit.

6 In our 2019 and 2024 manifestos there is no mention of reforming Council Tax or replacing it. In the Autumn Conference 2018 policy motion F34 'Promoting a Fairer Distribution of Wealth', Council Tax is mentioned as part of reforming taxing wealth and property and we quote part of that in the "Conference re-affirms its policy to make the taxation of residential property fairer by" section.

7 It can be calculated from Conference notes 3 that in 2017/18 it would have cost in the region of only £382 million to restore the benefit to 2012 levels for 2 million Council Tax payers.

8 Benefits should be financed nationally and people should not face a postcode lottery on what support they receive when they have no income but benefits. It is clear that by making councils finance this benefit most have reduced it because of the pressure on their budgets.

9 A motion on scrapping of local Council Tax Reduction Schemes and restoring the National Council Tax Benefit scheme funded nationally has been submitted to the last six conferences but was not selected for debate. Hopefully, this will be seventh time lucky.

10 This motion also calls for the replacing of Council Tax with a fairer, more proportional levy. It argues that Council Tax is discredited and dysfunctional, penalising the asset-poor far more than the asset-rich, with costly collection.

11 The replacement of Council Tax with a proportional levy should result in more than double the number of 'winners' than 'losers'.

12 It was implied that it would be better to discuss council tax in the autumn rather than the spring just before the local elections.

13 Last spring this motion was submitted for drafting advice as part of that advice Darryl Smalley suggested that I contact Rob Banks at the LGA and ask for his views, and if they were able to support the motion it would strengthen it. In June I asked Rob Banks for his view and he replied that he thought it 'could make for an interesting debate'.

3. Increasing government revenue motion

Submitted by

Local Party: Basingstoke and Deane

Conference notes that:

- A. Although UK net wealth has increased from around 300% to almost 700% of GDP over the last 60 years, wealth taxes bring in revenue worth only around 4% of GDP, the same proportion as in the mid-1960s.
- B. Wealth inequality is expected to worsen in the coming years, due to stagnant wages and rising debt, automation, growing numbers of young people unable to get on the housing ladder or save for the future, and an increasing flow of inheritances.
- C. Liberal Democrats have long advocated for raising a greater share of tax revenue from wealth, and have previously called for reforms to inheritance tax, capital gains tax, pension tax relief and property taxation to achieve this.
- D. The cost of pension income tax and National Insurance Contributions (NICs) relief were estimated by HMRC to be £48.7 billion in 2022/23.
- E. The UK gambling sector had revenues of £15.1 billion in 2022-23. Online gambling revenues increased to £6.5 billion in 2022-23, according to figures from the Gambling Commission. Around 300,000 adults in Britain experience problem gambling, as well as roughly 40,000 children.
- F. Public Health England has estimated that gambling costs the UK economy around £1.4 billion a year, through a combination of financial harms and the impact on physical and mental health, employment, education and crime.

Conference believes that:

- I. The government needs more revenue to fund the expenditure needed for the NHS, Social Care, education, local government, the justice system and prisons.
- II. Wealth inequality and the concentration of economic power are economically and socially damaging.
- III. Britain's deepening wealth gap rigs society in favour of those with substantial wealth and those able to inherit it, and has contributed to a growing intergenerational, geographical and class divide.
- IV. The Liberal Democrats should embrace the prosperity and innovation generated by the market economy, but also recognise its tendency to concentrate resources and power among a minority.
- V. Capitalism has only thrived thanks to the bold reforms – such as the welfare state and the breaking-up of monopolies – of liberal visionaries; these are needed once again if it is to survive the 21st century.
- VI. The tax system must play a greater role in promoting a more equitable distribution of wealth; taxation reflects the fact that wealth creation is reliant on public goods such as infrastructure and a healthy, educated labour force.

VII. Share buybacks divert funds from capital expenditures, research and development, and prioritise short-term gains over long-term growth.

VIII. Banks will pay £22 billion less over the five years 2024-29 than if revenues from the Bank Surcharge and Levy had been maintained at 2016-17 levels in real-terms.

Conference calls for:

A. The introduction of a 4% tax on the share buyback schemes of FTSE-100 listed companies, to incentivise productive investment, job creation and economic growth. This would be similar to the buyback tax introduced in the United States by President Biden. Share buybacks occur when large corporations use their profits to inflate their own share price in the stock market. Buybacks totalled £52 billion in 2023, and companies announced another £27 billion in the first three months of 2024.

B. The doubling the Remote Gaming Duty. The UK's 21% rate of tax on online gaming is below that levied in multiple European countries, as well as states in the US, Australia and Canada.

C. Pension relief to be reduced to the basic rate of tax (estimate in Consultation Paper 146B in as worth about £13 billion in autumn 2021). Currently, if you pay the higher or additional rate of Income Tax instead of the basic 20% tax relief you can receive tax relief at 40% or 45% on the amount of your pension contribution equal to the amount of pay you pay the higher rates on.

Education and Families Motions

1. Certainty for Ukrainian Children Living and Learning in the UK

Submitted by

SAO: Young Liberals

Conference notes:

I. That the Ukrainian people continue to resist Russia's war of aggression, despite waning support from the USA.

II. Since the start of the full-scale invasion in 2022, many Ukrainian families have decided to seek refuge in the UK.

III. The Children's Commissioner for England has supported calls to re-introduce a GCSE in the Ukrainian language.

Conference further notes with concern:

i. That many Ukrainians have faced uncertainty and instability due to the UK Government's decision not to automatically extend their visa status.

ii. Due to uncertainty over their status in the UK, many Ukrainians have been unable to accept offers of employment or agree rental leases and many Ukrainian parents have expressed concerns over their children being uprooted in the middle of their education.

iii. Research has shown that many Ukrainian children are facing delays and disruption to their education due to the long waits to enrol in local schools.

Conference believes that:

A. The UK has a proud history of welcoming both immigrants and refugees.

B. The UK must not waver in its support for Ukraine and the Ukrainian people in their fight against Russian aggression, their resistance to the full-scale invasion, and their right to self-determination and sovereignty.

C. Certainty of status is essential for Ukrainians who have come to the UK under the Ukraine Scheme to be able to rebuild their lives, help them to integrate into British society and contribute to our economy and local communities.

D. Certainty of status is essential for Ukrainian children who have come to the UK under the Ukraine Scheme to have the opportunity to flourish and achieve their full potential in education and examinations.

E. The re-establishment of academic qualifications in Ukrainian language would support academic attainment amongst displaced Ukrainians and help sustain links to linguistic and cultural heritage.

F. The creation of accessible and legal routes to asylum for all refugees and asylum seekers must be a priority.

G. No family should face the prospect of being separated due to the UK's asylum policies.

Conference calls for:

1. The UK Government to automatically extend visas for Ukrainians already granted status and residing in the UK.
2. The UK Government to establish a pathway to indefinite leave to remain for Ukrainians who have integrated into life in the UK and wish to remain long-term.
3. The UK Government to work to ensure that Ukrainian pupils and other children with experience of forced displacement do not face delays in school enrolment and have access to trauma-informed support.
4. The re-establishment of GCSEs and A-levels in Ukrainian language.
5. Ukrainian-language books and educational materials to be available in schools and libraries.
6. The UK Government to support Ukrainian cultural, educational, and linguistic initiatives for Ukrainian children whilst they reside in the UK.
7. The UK Government to provide guidance and support for Ukrainians living in the UK to access further and higher education, including apprenticeships.
8. The UK Government to provide support to displaced Ukrainians residing in the UK who wish to voluntarily resettle in safe areas of Ukraine.

2. Backing Youth Work to Build Communities

Submitted by

12 Party Members

Conference notes:

1. Access to high quality youth work, whether delivered through open-access youth centres, targeted providers tackling disadvantage, uniformed services like scouts or guides, or programmes like DofE, can change the lives of young people.
2. Investment in youth work yields a significant social return on investment, with between £3.20 to £6.40 in savings for every pound spent, by reducing demand for more expensive acute services in the NHS and criminal justice system.
3. Persistent under-investment in youth work in recent years has seen many youth centres close, and many youth workers leave the sector.
4. Youth service closures have been linked by studies to increases in crimes among 10-18 year olds living nearby, while another study showed teenagers in areas affected by such closures suffered “large decreases in performance” in their GCSEs.
5. Severe pressures on the youth sector workforce are negatively impacting the reach and availability of youth provision across the country.
6. A 2024 survey by OnSide found a clear desire amongst young people for more affordable leisure activities and safe, fun places to socialise and learn new skills.
7. The same survey found that smartphones are the most time-consuming activity for children, that 48% of young people spend most of their free time in their bedroom and that high levels of young people struggle with feelings of anxiety, and loneliness.

Conference welcomes the Government’s commitment to bringing forward a National Youth Strategy during 2025 and to use Dormant Assets funding to support youth services provision, but recognises that for any such strategy to be successful will require strong, measurable commitment to delivery from Government.

Conference believes that:

1. Youth work can be a key tool in helping every young person to achieve their potential.
High-quality youth work can act as a preventative service, helping young people to avoid negative outcomes like involvement in crime or anti-social behaviour, or being Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).
2. Youth work provision can lead to improved mental and physical health, strengthened life skills, and a heightened sense of belonging for young people that supports social cohesion.
3. To be effective, a National Youth Strategy must recognise the vital importance of both targeted and open-access youth work, and must put in place clear, measurable steps to:
 - a. Improve local access to youth services throughout the country
 - b. Improve facilities and infrastructure at youth centres

- c. Boost recruitment and retention to ensure that enough youth workers are active in the sector and able to continue a long-term career in the sector.
- 4. Youth services can often be ideally placed to deliver vital opportunities for outdoor education for the benefit of young people.
- 5. In making decisions about young people's lives and the services available to them, it is crucial to ensure the voices of those young people are heard.

Conference reaffirms Liberal Democrat calls for:

- 1. A Cabinet Minister for Children and Young People
- 2. Investment in youth services that are genuinely engaging and reach more young people

Conference therefore calls on the Government to:

- 1. Commit to a fair, long-term funding settlement to support youth work, resources and infrastructure.
- 2. Ensure the National Youth Strategy prioritises high-quality targeted and open-access work, with clear metrics for delivery.
- 3. Support charity-run youth services to leverage non-governmental funding, building on the model of Regional Youth Work Units to share best practice, build partnerships.
- 4. Clarify the statutory duty for local authorities to provide sufficient youth services, defining what "sufficient" means, and ensure adequate funding for these requirements.
- 5. Clarify local authorities' statutory duty to provide sufficient services, define what 'sufficient' means, and fund accordingly
- 6. Develop a comprehensive Workforce and Training Strategy for the Youth Sector, to ensure a sustainable pipeline of skilled practitioners.
- 7. Ensure youth voices shape all policy development by introducing a statutory duty for Local Authority Youth Councils and maintaining a 'feedback loop' to keep young people informed.
- 8. Strengthen partnerships between youth services and schools, employers, mental health professionals, youth justice and outdoor education providers through statutory guidance.
- 9. Support schools and youth organisations to deliver outdoor education, aiming for every young person to have at least one such experience in primary and one in secondary school.

Energy, Climate Change and the Environment Motions

1. Deter Drought and Ensure Water Security

Submitted by

Regional Party: Yorkshire and Humber

Conference notes that:

- A. The Environment Agency has:
 - a) Predicted that England will face a water demand shortfall of 5bn litres per day, enough for over 35m people, by 2050.
 - b) Declared drought in the Northwest of England and Yorkshire.
- B. Environment Secretary Steve Reed and Water Minister Emma Hardy have warned that the UK could face water shortages and rationing by the mid-2030s.
- C. In 2024, water companies in England and Wales lost a combined total of 1trn litres of water through leaks.
- D. Yorkshire Water has announced plans to reduce leaks, responsible for the loss of 21% of their water supply, by:
 - a) Investing £16m for this purpose for 2025.
 - b) Recruiting 100 leakage inspectors.
- E. The Environment Agency has outlined numerous projects, each aiming to provide at least an additional 10m litres of water per day, enough for 70,000 people, by 2050, including:
 - a) Ten new reservoirs.
 - b) Nine new desalination schemes.
 - c) Seven new water recycling schemes.
 - d) Six new water treatment facilities.
 - e) Four new surface water schemes.
 - f) Two new ground water schemes.
- F. As a waste product of desalination, brine can:
 - a) Contain metal and antifouling chemicals.
 - b) Damage marine ecosystems when dumped.
- G. Restricted water supplies have inhibited housing and business development in Sussex, Cambridgeshire, Suffolk and Norfolk.
- H. In line with the Environment Act 2021, the Environment Agency seeks to reduce per capita water consumption in England by 20% to 122 litres per day by 2037-38.

Conference further notes that current proposals to increase clean water supply:

- I. Include projects to be fulfilled by water companies fined millions for illegally discharging sewage.
- II. Include pre-existing plans that have been delayed and downsized, such as South West Water's Par desalination plant.
- III. Are mostly scheduled for completion between 2036 and 2050, despite warnings of water shortages by the mid-2030s.

Conference believes that:

- a. The UK's water security crisis is:
 - a) The direct result of climate change.
 - b) Compounded by ageing and poorly maintained infrastructure and a growing population.
 - c) Currently developing and not a possible event in the near future.
- b. Current plans to increase clean water supplies are insufficient to address the water security crisis.
- c. Permitting further environmental damage to maintain living standards threatened by climate change is self-defeating.

Conference affirms Liberal Democrat support for:

- i. The proposals of the policy motions Are You Drinking What We're Drinking? and The Clean Water Authority to:
 - a) Replace Ofwat with a new regulator, the Clean Water Authority, with strengthened regulatory powers over water companies to combat sewage discharges.
 - b) Increase the powers of local authorities to hold water companies accountable by establishing:
 - i. New water boards.
 - ii. Catchment partnerships between the water companies and local authorities.
 - iii. New planning powers requiring the installation of sustainable drainage systems.
 - c) Ensure greater protections from water companies for citizens and the environment.
 - d) Add consumer representatives to water company boards and make water bills show exactly where money is spent.
 - e) Create a new water social tariff to eliminate water poverty by the end of the next parliament.
 - f) Ensure that energy retrofitting programmes also includes measures to improve water resilience and cut bills.
 - g) Aim to increase the number of designated bathing water sites to 1,500 by 2030.

- h) Set legally binding targets to prevent sewage dumping into bathing waters and highly sensitive nature sites by 2030.
- i) Redevelop water companies as public benefit companies.
- ii. Taking the action needed now to achieve net zero by 2045.
- iii. Accelerating the deployment of renewable power and deliver energy security.
- iv. Putting the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, including ensuring availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all, at the heart of the UK's international development policy.
- v. Creating a nature-positive economy.

Conference resolves to:

1. Advance the construction of all proposed new reservoirs so that they are completed by 2040 at the latest with at least half being operational by 2035.
2. Develop incentives for the construction of reservoirs to ease concerns within nearby communities including:
 - a) Beautification schemes.
 - b) The provision of discounted locally generated hydroelectric power.
3. Invest revenue raised by fines from water companies in overhauling existing water infrastructure to reduce losses resulting from leaks.
4. Invest in research and development for a National Water Grid System to enable the transfer of water according to regional demand.
5. Invest in water recycling schemes making use of captured contaminants.
6. Require future desalination schemes to:
 - a) Operate using renewable energy.
 - b) Utilise minimally polluting desalination techniques.
 - c) Utilise waste brine for practical applications.
 - d) Minimise their environmental impact upon local communities and marine ecosystems.
7. Promote and support sustainable water use by:
 - a) Investing in integrated rainwater collection systems for private and commercial buildings for non-human consumption purposes such as irrigation.
 - b) Improve public education on individual and household water consumption.

Applicability: England only, except for lines 124-126 (Proposal 4.) which has federal applicability.

2. Restoring Our Seas

Submitted by

12 Party Members

Conference notes with concern that:

- A. The practices of bottom trawling and dredge fishing have had a significant impact on the biodiversity and productivity of marine habitats in the United Kingdom.
- B. Foreign-owned 'supertrawlers' operating in UK waters have caused damage to the marine environment with significant by-catch including marine mammals.
- C. Government policy lacks a holistic approach when it comes to protecting the marine environment and recognising its role in the climate emergency.

Conference recognises that the key to a healthy and productive marine environment is a healthy seabed, able to combat climate change and produce sustainable fish stocks.

Conference also recognises that healthy seas require healthy rivers, and that government policy must view them as one system.

Conference believes that the Liberal Democrats are best placed to bring in the policy changes to protect and restore our marine environment.

Conference reaffirms the Liberal Democrat commitment to:

- i) Manage our seas for nature by:
 - a) Reforming marine spatial planning to deliver a new, integrated approach, focused on sustainability.
 - b) Reforming the fishing quota allocation system to reward the most sustainable fleet, and ensure all catch limits are set at sustainable.
 - c) Putting in place effective management rules, to support the ecology of each protected area, including a ban on bottom trawling in marine protected areas.
 - d) Ensuring at least 30% of our seas will be fully or highly protected by 2030.
 - e) Funding coastal local government to increase the monitoring of the health of coastal waters and to develop ways to increase the communication of results.
- ii) Manage our lakes, rivers and streams for nature by:
 - a) Taking urgent measures, including mandating major infrastructure upgrades in the sewage system and implementing natural catchment solutions, to end sewage pollution, prevent harmful run-off from agriculture, and ensure developments do not add to the pollution burden on our precious freshwaters.
 - b) Introducing nutrient budgeting in English catchments, requiring projects in vulnerable areas to demonstrate 'nutrient negativity' before they proceed.
 - c) Setting new 'blue flag' standard and introducing a 'blue corridor' programme for rivers, streams and lakes to ensure clean, healthy water.
 - d) Abolishing Ofwat and replacing it with a regulator with real and meaningful powers.

Conference resolves to:

1. Introduce a total ban on bottom trawling and dredge fishing within the UK Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).
2. Introduce a total ban on trawlers over 100 metres in length within the UK Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ).
3. Create new no-take zones (NTZs) around sensitive or critically important habitats.
4. Establish Important Marine Mammal Areas (IMMAs) to better protect whales, dolphins, porpoises and seals.
5. Support projects aimed at restoring marine and freshwater ecosystems, including the reintroduction of beavers, restoration of oyster beds and planting of seagrass meadows.
6. Instruct the Environment Agency to identify and remove obsolete barriers from English rivers and streams to facilitate the passage of nutrients and migratory fish.
7. Work with international partners to help restore and protect rivers, lakes, seas and oceans globally.

3. This Land is Your Land; Restoring Public Paths Through Nature

Submitted by

12 Party Members

Conference notes that:

- a) Outdoor exercise and recreation leads to healthier lives and saves the NHS billions.
- b) Active travel tourism contributes billions to the UK economy and supports millions of jobs.
- c) 2024 marked the 75th anniversary of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 which led to the creation of Britain's 15 national parks and public rights of way; the basis for this legislation was put together by a Liberal MP, Arthur Hobhouse, who chaired the National Parks Committee.
- d) Access to nature is declining whilst inequality of access is increasing, with far fewer public paths in the most deprived areas.
- e) Walking, wheeling and cycling improve public health, the environment and our economy.
- f) Voie Verte have created tens of thousands of miles worth of public rights of way across Europe from disused railways, canal and river towpaths, utility company rights of way and derelict industrial land.
- g) Over 2,300 railway stations, 5,000 miles of track, were closed in the Beeching cuts during the 1960s.
- h) Almost 32,000 public rights of way are obstructed and the number of path blockages is increasing year on year, according to a BBC investigation.
- i) The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world, one of the least densely forested countries in Europe and in Britain one in six species are threatened with extinction.
- j) Waiting lists for allotments in the UK have risen steeply, with the average wait time at over three years, and up to 15 year waits in some cases.
- k) The actions of the Conservatives in government fell "far short" of what was required to leave the environment in a better state than they found it, according to the Office for Environmental Protection.
- l) The Conservative government cut the active travel budget; the Labour government has not fully reversed these cuts.
- m) Public bodies, local authorities, farmers and community groups do not have sufficient resources to improve access to nature and public rights of way.

Conference believes that:

- A) Everybody should have access to a healthy environment; the beauty of Britain's coastlines, rivers, lakes, woodlands and open green spaces.
- B) Thousands of miles worth of public rights of way could be a) created with the transformation of disused railways, canal routes, airfields and disused industrial land and b) recovered with more support for local and public authorities and community groups.

C) Local authorities and national park authorities have a critical role in unlocking the potential of protected landscapes for public access, health and education, along with nature's recovery but require adequate funding to maximise these benefits

D) Our protected landscapes are key to the restoration of our natural environment.

E) We must support farmers to develop world leading practices for sustainable land management, nature restoration and tackling climate change while continuing their primary function to boost Britain's food security.

Conference reaffirms our pledges to:

1) Create new walking, wheeling and cycling networks with a new nationwide active travel strategy.

2) Complete the King Charles III England Coast Path and designate 16 new National Trails, thereby doubling the current total.

3) Create a new designation of National Nature Parks, working with existing National Parks and National Landscapes to improve nature recovery and transform them into National Nature Parks, with stronger duties on National Park Authorities to create and protect carbon sinks.

4) Plant 60 million trees a year to improve air quality and enrich habitats and public spaces and empower Local Nature Recovery Strategies to identify a new Wild Belt for nature's recovery.

5) Strengthen the Office for Environmental Protection and provide more funding to the Environment Agency and Natural England to help protect our environment and enforce environmental laws.

6) Properly fund Environmental Land Management schemes (ELMs) with £1 billion extra a year to support farmers with the restoration of woodlands, peatlands and waterways, the creation of natural flood protections and the management of land to recover species and store carbon while also recognising food production as a vital public good.

7) Create a legal guarantee for fair and equitable access to nature and pass a Clean Air Act.

8) Ensure local authorities can maintain and more easily upgrade existing rights of way and process requests for new rights of way which provide legal protections for public use of paths.

9) Integrate nature and active and public travel in planning so that new development connects people, promotes healthier living, restores nature and boosts the economy.

10) Work with our European neighbours to tackle the nature crisis, including applying to join the European Environment Agency (EEA).

Conference resolves to:

I) Create thousands of miles worth of new public rights of way by turning former railway lines into paths for walkers, cyclists and horse riders by:

A. Introducing a national legal framework to make grassroots campaigns for new trails to be more successful, speedy and easy, whilst making sure landowners are fairly compensated.

B. Learning lessons from the creation of Voie Verte across Europe.

II) Provide incentives, including a long term fund, to encourage local authorities, public bodies and government to turn over disused land (including railway sidings, disused airfields, derelict industrial land, etc) to local communities for public use, including walking, wheeling and cycling routes, community gardens, allotments, ponds and green spaces.

III) Promote outdoor education, with the aim of ensuring every child is offered at least one outdoor education experience during primary school years and at least one such experience during secondary school years so that residential outdoor learning is part of the school curriculum and central to the government's Youth Strategy.

IV) Improve the surface of canal and river towpaths for habitats and public use, working with the Canal & River Trust and building on the success of fibreways.

V) Refresh, update and popularise the Countryside Code to improve public awareness about how to treat the countryside with respect.

4. Climate Change

Submitted by

Federal Policy Committee

Conference recognises that:

1. The world is facing climate and nature emergencies which are not under control.
2. Soaring temperatures leading to floods, droughts, wildfires and rising sea levels are already affecting millions of people directly, and billions more through falling food production and rising prices. In the UK, flooding, heatwaves, wildfires and droughts are all becoming more frequent and more severe.
3. Despite reducing greenhouse gas emissions by 54% since 1990, the UK is not on track to meet its target of net zero emissions by 2050, and both Conservative and Labour governments have failed adequately to prepare the UK for the impacts of climate change.
4. Opinion polls consistently show that a clear majority of people across the UK are worried about climate change and want the government to do more to tackle it.

Conference reaffirms the Liberal Democrat belief that that each generation is responsible for the fate of our planet and, by safeguarding the balance of nature and the environment, for the long term continuity of life in all its forms

Conference believes that:

1. Urgent action is needed – in the UK and globally – to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to net zero and avert catastrophe.
2. Bold climate action can also deliver jobs and prosperity across the UK, improve energy security and help to cut energy bills.
3. It is vitally important that climate action has the full support of the public, that they are fully engaged in its development, and that their concerns are fully addressed.
4. Effective action must be embedded across every level of government, with climate, nature and resilience treated as core priorities for decision-making, spending and legislation.
5. Local authorities are best placed to lead on community-based solutions, from retrofitting homes to building public transport infrastructure and supporting sustainable land use.

Conference therefore endorses policy paper XXX Climate Change, with its approach based on three key themes:

1. Putting people first: the transition must be equitable, fair and affordable, working with people rather than imposing solutions on them, and ensuring that no communities or workers are unfairly affected or left behind.
2. Tackling climate, nature and resilience together rather than treating them as unconnected issues.

3. Leading on the world stage to mobilise international cooperation, especially with the EU, to tackle these global challenges.

In particular, Conference welcomes its proposals to:

1. Cut energy bills and protect people from future energy shocks by:

- a. Strengthening energy security through investing in cheap, clean renewables.
- b. Lowering the price of electricity, improving grants and offering stamp duty rebates, to encourage decarbonisation of heat and transport.
- c. Introducing a social tariff and free home energy improvements for low-income households.

2. Ensure that no communities are left behind by:

- a. Establishing an independent Just Transition Commission to develop just transition plans and provide funding support for vulnerable communities.
- b. Providing particular just transition support to North Sea oil and gas workers to support the sector's transition to clean energy.

3. Make sure people's voices are heard, and support local action, by:

- a. Establishing an independent National Climate Assembly and models of local engagement.
- b. Decentralising powers and resources to local councils to enable local action, including a statutory duty to develop Climate, Nature and Resilience strategies, both for their own council's activities and procurement and for the area they cover.

4. Prioritise climate, nature and resilience in government by:

- a. Supplementing the current net zero framework and 2050 target by limiting consumption emissions in key sectors.
- b. Creating a clear voice and leadership on climate by appointing a Cabinet-level Chief Secretary for Sustainability in the Treasury and drawing up a Climate, Nature and Resilience Roadmap.
- c. Reforming the planning system to align with climate, nature, and resilience goals.

5. Lead global action on climate change by:

- a. Working closely with the UK's European neighbours through a new UK-EU Climate Security Pact, including linking the UK and EU emissions trading schemes and carbon border adjustment mechanisms.
- b. Organising international coalitions of the willing, working with like-minded countries on both global goals and focussed, targeted activities.
- c. Using trade policy to prioritise low-carbon goods and increase development assistance for climate action.

6. Deliver prosperity by:

- a. Placing decarbonisation at the heart of the UK's industrial strategy
- b. Using the National Wealth Fund to crowd in private investment and support green projects at local level.
- c. Reforming procurement rules to prioritise low-carbon goods and services, and strengthen corporate responsibility for climate and nature outcomes.
- d. Implementing a zero-carbon skills strategy, including Lifelong Training Grants and new green apprenticeships.

7. Protect communities from climate impacts by:

- a. Developing a coherent and comprehensive adaptation strategy with clear targets and monitoring, including for flooding, drought, heat and resilient infrastructure.
- b. Increasing funding for local communities, developing resilience standards for the key sectors, and supporting home-owners to install adaptation measures.

8. Decarbonise energy use by:

- a. Investing in renewables to achieve 95% decarbonisation of power by 2030.
- b. Supporting the roll-out of small modular nuclear reactors if they can provide a cost-effective and safe part of a decarbonised generation mix.
- c. Expanding grid capacity and support local communities affected by major new energy infrastructure.
- d. Supporting community energy in delivering net zero, building local support for climate action and sharing economic benefits.
- e. Supporting major home insulation upgrades, the widespread deployment of heat pumps and similar technologies, and zero-carbon standards for new builds.
- f. Accelerating the transition to electric vehicles, including expanding charging infrastructure and reforming planning rules.
- g. Promoting walking, cycling, public transport, and electrification of buses, and
- h. Supporting innovation, research and development in zero-carbon flight; but unless progress is more rapid than projected, reduce emissions by reforming air passenger duty for international flights to target the most frequent flyers and limiting airport expansion.
- i. Expanding incentives for electrification and carbon capture in industry and supporting energy and resource efficiency.

9. Ensure the agriculture, land use and forestry sector becomes a collective net carbon sink by 2050 by:

- a. Properly funding the Environmental Land Management Schemes, with an extra £1 billion a year to support profitable, sustainable and nature-friendly farming resilient to the impacts of climate change.
- b. Supporting research and innovation, in particular on alternative proteins, with a new Farming and Land Use Catapult innovation centre and a new Food and Farming Research and Innovation fund.

c. Taking steps to reduce food waste, and requiring public sector food and catering to meet high sustainability standards.

10. Support carbon dioxide removal measures, giving top priority to nature-based solutions for carbon removal, including expanding woodland and restoring peatlands.

Equalities Motions

1. Defence of the Less Abled/Minorly Disabled

Submitted by

Local Party: Gravesham

Conference notes that:

A. That, according to an Ipsos poll of 4,000 people aged 16–75 for BBC News, 24% of respondents reported living with chronic pain.

B. That data from the Office for National Statistics (ONS) shows that 4% of the UK population experiences significant issues relating to their back or neck.

C. That ABA Therapy estimates approximately 20% of people (1 in 5) experience hypermobility.

D. That under the current definition of disability in the Equality Act 2010, individuals must meet the following criteria:

They must have a physical or mental impairment lasting or expected to last at least 12 months.

E. The impairment must substantially limit their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities.

F. That individuals with less visible or intermittent conditions often do not qualify as disabled under the current legal framework, despite experiencing significant discomfort or limitations.

Conference believes that:

i. That the current legal definition of disability insufficiently recognises and protects people with chronic, fluctuating, or less externally visible conditions.

ii. That many individuals face stigmatisation and practical exclusion in the workplace and society, due to the lack of formal recognition of their lived experiences.

iii. That Liberal Democrat values of equality require an active state to protect all individuals from discrimination, including those with less easily categorised disabilities.

iv. That protections under the Equality Act should be inclusive of people who experience frequent and noticeable pain or discomfort as a result of chronic or recurring conditions.

Conference reaffirms:

1. The Liberal Democrats' commitment to equality and inclusion for all disabled people, regardless of the visibility or severity of their condition.

2. The principle that everyone should be able to participate fully in society and access appropriate support without unjustified gatekeeping or exclusion.

Conference calls for:

a. The UK Government to amend the Equality Act 2010 to include an additional criterion under the definition of disability, such as:

“Does your condition cause you to experience frequent and noticeable pain or discomfort?”

b. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) to issue updated guidance that recognises and protects people whose conditions result in significant internal or subjective difficulties, even if these do not meet traditional criteria of substantial external limitation.

c. Employers, service providers, and public bodies to adopt inclusive policies that accommodate individuals who suffer from chronic pain, hypermobility, scoliosis or other less visible impairments.

d. Local authorities and the NHS to develop and implement better support frameworks for people with minor or less-recognised disabilities.

2. Transgender peoples rights under the Equality Act

Submitted by

SAOs: Young Liberals & LGBT+ Lib Dems

Conference notes:

The UK Supreme Court Ruling in 'For Women Scotland Ltd (Appellant) v The Scottish Ministers (Respondent)' that ruled that for the purposes of the Equality Act 'Sex' refers to Biological sex, not sex as amended by the Gender Recognition Act 2004.

The EHRC interim guidance on the implications of the UK Supreme Court ruling which states that 'trans women (biological men) should not be permitted to use the women's facilities and trans men (biological women) should not be permitted to use the men's facilities, as this will mean that they are no longer single-sex facilities and must be open to all users of the opposite sex'.

The negative impact of similar 'bathroom bans' in the United States of America.

The European Court of Human Rights ruling in Goodwin v UK (2002) which ruled that trans people have a right to privacy over their sex assigned at birth and have a legal right to Gender Recognition.

The Court of Appeal ruling in Croft v Royal Mail (2003) which ruled that permanently banning trans people from the spaces of their gender identity is likely to amount to unlawful discrimination.

The ILGA rainbow map which shows that the UK has fallen to 22nd place.

Conference believes:

Trans Women are Women, Trans Men are Men and Non-Binary people are Non-Binary.

That trans people have a right to use the spaces of their lived gender.

Trans people have a right to legal recognition for all purposes under law.

The EHRC interim guidance, and updated code of practice, is a misinterpretation of the UK Supreme Court ruling.

Conference re-affirms:

The Liberal Democrats commitment to trans equality as per the 'Free to be who you are' policy paper passed at the Harrogate 2025 Liberal Democrat Conference.

The Liberal Democrats commitment for Self Declaration of Legal Sex.

The Liberal Democrats commitment to introduce X gender markers on sex-identifying documentation.

The Liberal Democrats commitment to reduce or eliminate sex-identifying documentation where it is not needed or where there is not a practical need for such a marker.

Conference calls for:

The Equality Act to be amended to state that for the purposes of the act 'sex' refers to the gender the individual identifies with.

The EHRC to withdraw its interim guidance, and update its statutory code of practice to clarify transgender people's right to use the spaces that align with their Gender Identity regardless of whether or not they possess a Gender Recognition Certificate.

Health and Social Care Motions

1. A Brexit to die for?

Submitted by

Regional Party: North West Region

1. Conference notes that the Government has not challenged the veracity or substance of assertions made by independent eminent experts in a report to the Cabinet Office and DSIT, which was leaked to “The Guardian” newspaper, regarding the “significant negative impact” on Cancer Research and treatment arising from red tape which, together with increased costs arising as a direct consequence of Brexit, have “damaged the practical ability” of doctors to provide NHS patients with new life-saving drugs via international clinical trials. We also note that these problems are primarily attributable to the limitations on the mobility of the Cancer research workforce, access to research collaboration and funding, together with the clinical trials regulatory environment, including the unnecessary duplication and complication arising from our leaving the European Medicines Agency (EMA).
2. Conference considers it unconscionable that adherence to a particular form of ideological Brexit purity has led to the entirely predictable consequence of NHS patients, children among them being denied drugs which could extend or save their lives.
3. Conference demands urgent action to remedy this situation. We call on the government to act immediately to eliminate all the Brexit red tape entangling the UK drugs innovation pipeline and to initiate the process for the UK to rejoin the European Medicines Agency.

2. The Trolley Problem: Getting Emergency Care Back on Track

Submitted by

12 Party Members

Conference notes that:

- A. The NHS's emergency care services, from ambulance response times to A&E waiting times, are under intolerable and unsafe pressure, risking the lives of thousands each year.
- B. In 2024/25, around 532,000 patients waited over 12 hours in A&E from decision to admit to admission in England, a 21% rise from last year and a nearly 20-fold increase over five years.
- C. Corridor care is now routine, with 80% of physicians reporting they were forced to treat patients in unsafe spaces this winter.
- D. Over the past seven years, the Government has spent an average of £376 million of emergency funding each year to tackle the NHS winter crisis.
- E. Ambulance response times often fall below national standards, resulting in life-threatening delays.
- F. Air ambulances operate as charitable services and face chronic underfunding despite their critical role in saving lives, particularly in rural and remote areas.
- G. NHS staff face burnout and unmanageable workloads, risking patient safety in emergency care settings.

Conference believes that:

- I. Everyone deserves access to timely, safe, and high-quality emergency care, regardless of the time of year or where they live.
- II. After years of Conservative mismanagement, our NHS has been left on its knees, with shocking practices like corridor care, where patients are left waiting on trolleys without dignity, safety, or proper attention, becoming dangerously normalised.
- III. Chronic winter crises are not inevitable but the result of poor planning, underfunding, and neglect and result in emergency Government top-ups year after year.
- IV. Ambulance services, air ambulances and emergency infrastructure are lifelines that should be recognised and protected.
- V. Longer waiting times for ambulances have a severe knock-on effect on people's health.

Conference reaffirms calls to:

- Provide national, high-quality social care to all who need it, preventing delayed discharges and freeing up A&E beds.
- Guarantee routine GP appointments within seven days, or 24 hours for urgent cases, to reduce unnecessary A&E visits.

- Improve early access to mental health support with community walk-in hubs to prevent severe crises in A&E.
- Create a £50 million-a-year emergency fund, to allow ambulance trusts to reverse closures of community ambulance stations and cancel planned closures.
- Publish accessible, localised reports of ambulance response times.
- Launch a campaign to retain, recruit and train paramedics and other ambulance staff.

Conference calls on the Government to:

1. Ensure that our emergency care system has the staff it needs by:
 - a. Creating a dedicated accident and emergency care workforce plan.
 - b. Publishing a national strategy to ensure all emergency departments meet or exceed 'good' safety standards as assessed by the Care Quality Commission (CQC), with a report on implementation progress laid before Parliament annually.
2. Reduce pressure on A&E departments through effective triaging of patients by:
 - a. Ensuring every A&E waiting room has a qualified clinician to monitor patients and every 111 call centre has a clinical manager on shift to rapidly assist with complex cases.
 - b. Rolling out mental health crisis centres nationally with urgency to prevent a postcode lottery of proper mental health crisis response.
3. End the postcode lottery on emergency care by:
 - a. Classifying all NHS ambulance hubs as critical infrastructure to prevent closure or downgrading without a full public consultation and ministerial sign-off.
 - b. Launching a national drive for more Community First Responders in rural areas, equipping them with skills to save lives.
 - c. Introducing a national commissioning framework to integrate air ambulance services into the NHS emergency response system while allowing them to retain their fundraising activities as charities.
4. Re-establish the cross-party talks on social care, finish the Casey review within a year, and urgently implement the reforms.
5. Ensure that this winter crisis is the last by launching a new Winter Taskforce, which would manage a ring fenced fund over the next four years, to build resilience in A&E departments and ambulance services during peak seasons.
6. Commit to ending corridor care by the end of this Parliament so patients do not have to continue to suffer in undignified and unsuitable conditions.

3. Never Again: Justice for Contaminated Blood Victims

Submitted by

11 Party Members

Conference notes that:

A. Over 30,000 individuals were infected with HIV and hepatitis C through contaminated NHS blood products during the 1970s and 1980s, resulting in more than 3,000 deaths and causing immeasurable suffering to victims and their families.

B. The subsequent inquiry found that the disaster was largely avoidable and was exacerbated by a "subtle, pervasive and chilling" cover-up by the NHS and successive governments.

C. In February 2025, the government expanded the Infected Blood Compensation Scheme to include more relatives and carers, but concerns remain over delays and lack of transparency, with many still awaiting proper acknowledgment and redress.

D. Despite promising to extend the duty of candour to all public officials under the Hillsborough law by April 2025, the Government is yet to deliver this vital reform.

E. The Infected Blood Scandal is one of many scandals involving medical negligence which, taken together, have caused thousands of avoidable deaths and left tens of thousands living with painful and damaging lifelong impacts.

F. Medical scandals come at a huge financial cost for the taxpayer, with £11.8 bn allocated to compensate infected blood victims and annual NHS compensation payouts reaching nearly £3 bn last year.

G. Medical scandals often disproportionately affect vulnerable and marginalised populations, compounding health inequalities.

Conference believes that:

I. Victims and families of the Infected Blood Scandal deserve full justice, recognition, and timely compensation.

II. The Government's apology and creation of a compensation scheme were welcome steps, but ongoing delays and lack of transparency are undermining victims' trust and prolonging their suffering.

III. The Government's choice to drag its feet over implementing the Inquiry's recommendations means that vital actions needed to prevent future scandals are not being taken.

IV. It is not only the victims of the infected blood scandal that have suffered at the hands of medical negligence, but also victims of the multiple maternity care scandals, the vaginal mesh scandal, sodium valproate scandal, primodos scandal among many others - each of which we must learn from to prevent future harm.

Conference calls on the Government to:

1. Deliver justice for those affected by the Infected Blood Scandal by:
 - a. Immediately and efficiently processing all compensation claims under the Infected Blood Compensation Scheme, ensuring that no eligible individual is left behind.
 - b. Implementing all the inquiry's recommendations and reporting annually to Parliament on its progress in an oral statement delivered by the Minister.
 - c. Delivering a permanent memorial to ensure "the worst treatment disaster in the history of the NHS" is not forgotten.
2. Provide ongoing support for victims of all medical scandals and their families, including access to healthcare, psychological services, and social support to address long-term impacts and tackle compounded health inequalities.
3. End the culture of cover-up exposed by the Infected Blood Inquiry and other scandal inquiries and prevent future medical scandals by:
 - a. Immediately introducing legislation to impose a statutory duty of candour on all public officials to promote transparency.
 - b. Establishing a Patient Safety Taskforce, overseen by the Patient Safety Agency, to improve data sharing across NHS bodies, analyse patient risk, and coordinate safety responsibilities effectively.
 - c. Mandating Integrated Care Boards to include patient voices at board level, through organisations like Healthwatch, ensuring patient experiences shape healthcare delivery.
 - d. Incorporating an "Ending Medical Negligence" curriculum into clinician training, featuring testimonies from victims of medical scandals to ensure mistakes are not repeated.
4. Commit to investing any future savings from the almost £3 bn in NHS annual compensation payouts into frontline services, to deliver better quality care to all.

4. A Statutory Regulatory Body for Health and Care Managers

Submitted by

Local Party: Shewsbury

1. It is 14 years since The Government responded to the BBC Panorama Investigation of Winterbourne View, which found a systemic failure to protect people or to investigate allegations of abuse, promising stronger accountability and corporate responsibility in the Care Sector, but has failed to implement this.
2. It is 12 years since The Mid-Staffordshire Hospital NHS Trust report by Sir Robert Francis recommended (on Page 78) that the common culture and values of the NHS must be applied at all levels of the organisation, but of particular importance is the example set by leaders and that a leadership staff college should be created. This has still not been implemented.
3. Multiple health and care scandals have been uncovered over the last decade, with each report concluding that lessons have not been learned.

Conference believes that:

- A. Published standards should apply to all providers of health and care.
- B. Successive Governments' failure to implement the recommendations of multiple reports over the last 14 years is a catastrophic dereliction of its duty to patients, those receiving care and also health and care staff.
- C. There should be a national regulatory body to ensure that managers in the health and care sectors are subject to the same level of scrutiny and accountability as all other professionals in those sectors.

Conference calls for:

1. An independent national regulatory body for all health and care managers, both non-clinical and clinical.
2. This body to oversee standardised training and accreditation of health and care managers, with publication of a code of conduct, national standards for appraisal, investigation of incidents and sanctions for non-compliance.
3. The funding of this body to come from managers themselves (as with all health professionals, including the General Medical and Nursing and Midwifery Councils).

Applicability: Federal

5. Don't Nix Care: Protecting our Hospices

Submitted by

11 Party Members

Conference notes that:

- A. Hospices support 300,000 people every year, allowing patients to die with dignity while easing pressure on the NHS by avoiding unnecessary and expensive hospital stays.
- B. It costs £1.6 billion annually to run hospices across the UK, yet most rely heavily on charitable donations, with only a third of funding typically coming from the NHS.
- C. In 2024, one in five hospices were forced to cut services, amid a funding crisis.
- D. The recent rise in Employer National Insurance Contributions has cost hospices in England as much as £34 million per year, placing even greater strain on a sector already on the brink.
- E. 100,000 people a year are estimated to miss out on hospice care and face dying in discomfort at home or in hospital.
- F. Only a third of local areas in England are meeting the required standard for 24/7 end-of-life care for children and young people at home.
- G. Hospices provide vital bereavement services, including psychological support, which are overwhelmingly reliant on charitable funding.
- H. With the annual number of deaths projected to grow to 780,000 by 2040, demand for hospice care is only increasing.
- I. An ageing population means more people are living with complex, long-term conditions such as dementia, which require specialist care.

Conference believes that:

- I. All hospices should be properly resourced to meet NHS standards and provide the best possible care for patients and their families.
- II. Funding cuts and years of neglect under the previous Conservative government have led to a reduction in services, with hospices and end of life charities now unable to cover the difference.
- III. The Government's decision to vote against the Liberal Democrat amendment exempting health and care providers from increases in Employer National Insurance Contributions has only increased the financial strain the hospice sector is under.
- IV. The postcode lottery of palliative care must end, especially for children's care. Everyone should have access to high-quality care regardless of where they live so that their choices at the end of life are genuine and free from fear.
- V. Failure to support hospices will mean yet more pressure will be piled onto our already overstretched NHS.

VI. The Government's announcement to increase capital spend for hospices in December 2024 was welcome but not sufficient to prevent hospices from struggling financially.

Conference reaffirms calls to:

- Provide a fair funding deal for hospices, including children's hospices, recognising the valuable services they provide and saving money on hospital admissions.
- Double the funding for Bereavement Support Payments, reversing the last Conservative government's cuts since 2017.

Conference calls on the Government to:

1. Exempt hospices from the April increase in Employer National Insurance Contributions to prevent devastating cuts to vital services.
2. Set up a commission and work with providers to develop a plan to put hospices on a sustainable, fair, and consistent financial footing.
3. End the postcode lottery of palliative care by allocating funding by demand so that areas that struggle to attract charitable funding are properly supported to deliver high quality care no matter where they operate.
4. Develop a dedicated hospice workforce plan to cut vacancy rates as soon as possible to ensure providers can deliver services for all those in need.
5. Develop a national strategy to improve the integration of hospice services with the wider health and social care system.
6. Produce clear legal advice on the use of analgesics at the end of life.
7. Work with hospices to improve access to bereavement counselling and therapy for anyone needing support from the point of a loved one's diagnosis.
8. Work with hospices to deliver greater support with practical tasks after a death, and consult with the sector on how to improve minimum standards for death administration processes, including ways of improving and expanding the "Tell us Once" service.

6. A Fairer Deal for those living with ME

Submitted by

SAO: Liberal Democrat Disability
Organisation

Conference notes that:

I. It is estimated that up to 1.3 million people in the UK are affected by Myalgic Encephalomyelitis (ME), a complex, chronic condition affecting multiple body systems.

II. While the long-awaited cross-government Delivery Plan for ME/CFS is the first step in the right direction, it lacks ambition and funding.

III. Tessa Munt MP has recently written to the Secretary of State for Health calling for greater action and improved funding for ME care and research. All 72 Liberal Democrat MPs signed this letter, demonstrating the policy area is a good fit for party advocacy.

IV. People with ME have one of the lowest qualities of life of any condition and have faced decades of inadequate care. A recent Prevention of Future Deaths report highlighted 'non-existent' care for those most severely affected. The sickest lie in darkened rooms, sometimes unable to move, speak or even swallow, with no cure or established treatment.

V. Patient outcomes have been affected by decades of chronic underfunding. From 2015-20, just £6 million was committed in UK public funding for ME research, less than 5% of comparable diseases.

VI. Carers for people with severe ME bear extraordinary financial, and emotional pressures in light of absent NHS care and poor knowledge about ME across healthcare, social care, and wider society.

VII. Since 2020, shortcomings in ME research and care have also impacted people with Long Covid, an overlapping infection-associated chronic condition (IACC) affecting at least two million people in the UK. The five-fold increase in those with ME symptoms following the pandemic has led to estimates placing the annual cost to the economy at £22 billion.

VIII. Understanding how to support those with IACCs is a vital component of future pandemic preparedness. Progress in ME research will have broader relevance, given the significant overlap with related IACCs such as Chronic Lyme disease, Postural Orthostatic Tachycardia Syndrome (POTS), Mast Cell Activation Syndrome (MCAS) and Fibromyalgia.

Conference believes that:

A. The best way to urgently affect positive improvement for people with ME and other IACCs is to provide appropriate funding for research and service provision.

B. ME patients and carers:

- a. Urgently require ringfenced Government funding for research and improvements to NHS care, proportionate to the disabling impact and economic cost of the condition.
- b. Require increased knowledge about and improved attitudes towards ME across the NHS, government departments and society.
- c. Require safe, informed, compassionate and evidence-based NHS care.

Conference calls on the UK Government to:

- i. Begin the process of placing research and NHS services for ME (and consequently IACCs) on an equal footing with other conditions, investing £100 million over the course of the next five years to ensure research funding and investments in care that reflect the conditions' economic footprint.
- ii. Carry out rigorous research to fully investigate the prevalence (including geographically and across demographic groups) and economic impact of ME, and current shortfalls in care and clinical provision.
- iii. Commit to clear and ambitious targets, such as 100% compliance with the 2021 NICE Guideline for ME across NHS Trusts and Integrated Care Boards by 2028, to ensure accountability for future progress.
- iv. Commit to establishing a Centre of Excellence for care for IACCs, alongside a national research platform, providing country-wide leadership and expertise across care and research.

International and Defence Motions

1. Protecting the Rights of Hong Kongers

Submitted by

12 Party Members

Conference notes:

- a. Since the 2020 National Security Law was imposed, which violates the principle of the Joint Declaration, the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) has taken further steps to crackdown on civil liberties in Hong Kong, including by broadening the scope and definition of political crimes through the passage of the Safeguarding National Security Bill in March 2024.
- b. The arbitrary denial of entry to Hong Kong for Liberal Democrat MP Wera Hobhouse - the first time a British Parliamentarian has been blocked since the 1997 handover - further illustrates the increasing authoritarianism of the Hong Kong authorities.
- c. The growth of an insidious campaign of transnational repression, sponsored by the CCP and implemented by the Chinese intelligence services, which is targeting pro-democracy Chinese and Hong Kong activists, including those based in the UK, who aim to shine a spotlight on the abuses of the Chinese state and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR).
- d. The offering of bounties by the HKSAR of up to HK\$1,000,000 (circa £94,000) for the arrest of Hong Kong and Chinese pro-democracy activists living abroad, including in the UK, and the anonymous delivery of letters to neighbours of pro-democracy activists urging them to bring activists to the Chinese Embassy in London.
- e. The alarming proposals for a Chinese 'mega-embassy' in the heart of London which, if greenlighted, would pose serious risks to the UK's national and cyber security, and which have been opposed by nearly 30 human rights and civil society organisations - including the Hong Kong Democracy Council and Safeguard Defenders.
- f. The Government's failure to place China (including HKSAR) on the enhanced tier of the Foreign Influence Registration Scheme (FIRS), despite the risks posed by the CCP to British interests and values.
- g. As Beijing ramps up its efforts to intimidate these courageous activists, the Government's Immigration White Paper has cast doubt on the future of the British National Overseas (BNO) pathway - including whether the proposed increase to the general residence requirement for settlement from five to ten years will apply to the BNO scheme.

Conference believes that:

- I. The UK owes a unique and historic obligation to Hong Kongers, including those who have travelled to the UK already and those still living in Hong Kong who wish to leave the city.
- II. Efforts to intimidate pro-democracy Chinese and Hong Kong activists living in the UK are abhorrent and constitute an attack on British sovereignty which must be rigorously and consistently opposed.
- III. Hong Kongers wishing to travel and settle in the UK under the BNO scheme must be provided with clarity on the pathway's requirements and timeline.

Conference reaffirms:

- I. The policy recommendations proposed in Motion F31: Hong Kong's Future (2020).
- II. The Liberal Democrats' commitment to ensuring Hong Kongers have a lift raft should they need it - as pioneered by the late Paddy Ashdown - in light of China reneging on the promises enshrined in the Handover Declaration.

Conference calls on the UK Government to:

1. Block the application for the Chinese 'mega embassy' and take measures to ensure that there is the right to peacefully and safely protest outside the proposed construction site.
2. Establish a bespoke Police hotline for reporting incidents of political intimidation, and reaffirm the illegality of bounty hunting in the UK - sending a clear message that the UK will not tolerate CCP-sponsored attempts at extraterritorial repression.
3. Retain the 5 year pathway to settlement for all BNO visa holders, reflecting our unique and historic obligation to the people of Hong Kong and providing the certainty that Hong Kongers deserve.
4. Include all Chinese Communist Party and HKSAR officials, as well as Chinese Communist Party-linked organisations, on the 'enhanced tier' of the FIRS.
5. Implement targeted sanctions against those officials in the HKSAR and the Chinese Communist Party identified as responsible for raising bounties on the heads of pro-democracy Hong Kong and Chinese activists living in the UK.
6. Appoint a Home Office Departmental Tsar for the 'Protection of pro-democracy activists' - with responsibility for laying an annual report before Parliament outlining the Government's progress in strengthening protection for activists against foreign intimidation, and oversee the tackling of disinformation campaigns aimed at inciting violence against pro-democracy Hong Kong and Chinese activists.

2. Defending Women's Rights Across the Globe

Submitted by

SAO: Liberal Democrat Women and FIRC

Conference notes:

A. Progress on women's rights is being eroded, and women across the world, particularly women with intersecting marginalised identities including women of colour, disabled women, and LGBT+ women, are facing violence, abuse, and vulnerability at horrifying levels

B. In February 2025, Starmer announced a cut to Official Development Assistance (ODA) to 0.3% of Gross National Income (GNI), following ODA cuts by the previous government. Aid cuts have disproportionately impacted programmes focusing on women and girls, and 90% of women-led and women's rights organisations surveyed by UN Women have been affected by global foreign aid cuts

C. Misogyny is rising on social media and there is global backlash to women's rights, with nearly a quarter of countries reporting backlash on gender equality in 2024

D. Opposition to abortion rights from the Trump administration threatens women worldwide, and the funding freeze to the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) will deprive women and girls of access to essential, life-saving reproductive healthcare

E. Violence against women is epidemic. 1 in 3 women have experienced sexual violence or physical violence, 640 million women over the age of 15 have experienced intimate partner violence, and 230 million women and girls have experienced Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

F. Women and girls are among those most at risk of living in poverty, with 1 in 10 women living in extreme poverty, and women - particularly those who are young, from a migrant background, and with low educational attainment - disproportionately engage in low paid and precarious work, such as the garment industry

G. The gender pay gap and economic inequality persists: 2.4 billion women of working age do not have equal economic opportunities to men, 708 million women are outside of the labour force due to unpaid caring responsibilities, and 119 million girls are not in school

H. In 2023, the United Nations reported that the proportion of women killed in armed conflicts doubled and cases of conflict-related sexual violence increased by 50% from 2022, and just 29% of rape survivors could access the support they needed within 72 hours due to insufficient funding for gender-based violence response programmes

I. Women are vastly underrepresented in political leadership: 3/4 of parliamentarians across the world are men and despite being essential to peace processes, women made up less than 10% of peace negotiators in 2023

J. Women are disproportionately affected by environmental degradation, with worst-case scenario estimates that 236 million more women and girls could face food insecurity by 2050

Conference believes:

I. The UK should strive to be a global leader in defending women's rights and fighting against the growing backlash to gender equality, especially amongst some young men

II. All women and girls deserve safety, equal rights and access to opportunities, and bodily autonomy

III. Gender equality is essential for peace, security, and economic prosperity, alongside upholding human rights

IV. Women-led and women's rights organisations must be at the centre of responses to humanitarian crises and efforts to strive for global gender equality

Conference calls on the UK Government to:

1. Unreservedly condemn the global backlash to gender equality and rising misogyny and gender-based violence, striving to become a world leader in standing up for the rights of women and marginalised communities and opposing all forms of injustice and oppression
2. Develop a roadmap to restore UK aid spending at 0.7% of GNI, targeting at least 20% of UK aid on striving for gender equality and considering how aid spending decisions affect marginalised communities, including long-term funding commitments for gender equality programmes, women's rights organisations, and women-led organisations
3. Centre the need to achieve gender equality in all humanitarian action, crisis response and diplomacy, acknowledging the need for an intersectional and cross-departmental response to gender injustice
4. Hold social media companies to account on tackling misogyny online, putting pressure on these companies to implement stronger content moderation and address how their algorithms promote misogynistic content, and prioritise efforts to improve young people's digital literacy and awareness of their digital diets
5. Advocate for the right to abortion and access to reproductive healthcare, condemning the attacks on the right to choose from the Trump administration and the USAID funding freeze
6. Act to be a global leader in ending violence against women and girls, including by:
 - a. Increasing the proportion of ODA spent on efforts to reduce violence against women and girls and support survivors, ensuring that initiatives are expert-led, centring women-led and women's rights organisations
 - b. Supporting education and community initiatives which help to reduce violence against women and girls and empower young girls, such as Girls' Clubs
 - c. Prioritising the Government's Preventing Sexual Violence in Conflict Initiative, by increasing funding, especially for women-led and women's rights organisations, fostering survivor-led global collaboration, and ensuring addressing sexual violence is a priority in conflict
 - d. Working to eradicate FGM by implementing health education interventions, engaging with communities including religious and community leaders to drive social change, and committing sufficient funding to relevant grassroots organisations
7. Champion women's economic empowerment by advocating for recognition of the value of unpaid care work, promoting equal economic rights and opportunities for women, and supporting efforts to improve women's access to finance and resources

8. Promote women's political representation, using soft power to promote gender quotas while working with organisations to address the barriers to women's political participation, such as access to finance and online harassment
9. Leverage diplomatic efforts to ensure that both global and local woman leaders, as well as women-led and women's rights organisations, are empowered to participate in humanitarian action, peacebuilding, and conflict resolution
10. Advocate for gender justice to be embedded in approaches to global green energy transitions, leading by example domestically, and fostering international cooperation towards this aim

3. Georgia's Future

Submitted by

12 Party Members

Conference notes:

- a. The deeply alarming steps taken by the Georgian Dream Party to erode civil society and freedoms in Georgia, as well as to entrench its power, including through passing:
 - i. The 'Foreign Agents Law' in May 2024, enabling the Government to impose extensive monitoring and reporting requirements on many of the roughly 26,000 non-governmental organisations in Georgia, weakening civil society and restricting western support.
 - ii. The 'Offshore Law' in May 2024, exempting asset transfers from offshore accounts to Georgia from taxation and heightening the risk that the country could become a conduit for money laundering activities, particularly for sanctioned Russian oligarchs.
 - iii. The Family Values Act in September 2024, banning same-sex marriage, adoption by same-sex couples, gender-affirming care and changing one's gender on identity documents, and depictions of LGBTQ+ people in media.
 - iv. The Foreign Agents Registration Act in April 2025, which has been described by the Committee to Protect Journalists as threatening to "wipe out Georgia's donor-reliant independent press and media advocacy groups."
- b. The rigging of Georgia's October 2024 parliamentary elections, described by the European Parliament as "being neither free nor fair, representing yet another manifestation of the continued democratic backsliding of the country for which the ruling Georgian Dream party is fully responsible".
- c. The systematic and violent suppression of pro-democracy activists following the start of widespread protests against Prime Minister Irakli Kobakhidze's move to halt the country's EU integration process in November 2024.
- d. The immense courage and resolve of Georgian protestors who have stood up to oppose Georgian Dream's efforts to undermine democracy, the rule of law and the expressed intent of the Georgian people for closer European integration.
- e. The arbitrary arrest and detention of leading Georgian opposition politicians - including the leaders of the Coalition for Change, Nika Melia and Zurab Japaridze - as part of a campaign to intimidate pro-democracy figureheads.
- f. Russia's systematic and pervasive interference in Georgia's democratic processes, particularly through sponsoring the spread of disinformation such as the 'Global War Party' conspiracy.

Conference affirms its belief that:

- I. The people of Georgia retain their fundamental right to self-determination and continue to express their desire for closer relations with Europe in the face of encroaching Russian influence and violent suppression by the authorities.

II. As both a moral and strategic imperative, the UK must be leading global efforts to support Georgian civil society and show that attempts to intimidate and violently suppress pro-democracy activists and politicians are unacceptable and will have consequences.

Conference welcomes steps taken by the UK Government to sanction key officials in the Georgian Government responsible for overseeing the crackdown on civil liberties, including - among others - the General Prosecutor, the Minister of Internal Affairs and the Tbilisi Police Department Director.

Conference calls on the UK Government to go further, including by:

1. Sanctioning leading members of the Georgia Dream party who have pioneered legislation to suppress civil liberties, including Bidzina Ivanishvili - its founder and honorary chairman - and his close associates.
2. Conducting an audit of UK-based assets owned by officials from Georgia and organisations associated with Georgian Dream.
3. Reviewing the UK/Georgia Strategic Partnership and Cooperation Agreement.
4. Extending travel bans to all officials at the Georgian Ministry of Internal Affairs and State Security Service.
5. Supporting the continuing operation of the BBC World Service in Georgia, helping to challenge pervasive Georgian Dream propaganda.
6. Coordinating our sanctions policy with partners in the EU and US, enabling a consistent, robust and unified approach to sanctions implementation.
7. Recognising Salome Zourabichvili as the rightful President of Georgia - a symbol of democratic legitimacy.

4. Towards a Ceasefire and Political Resolution in Sudan

Submitted by

12 Party Members

Conference notes:

- a. The brutal conflict in Sudan is a disaster for innocent Sudanese civilians.
- b. Sudan faces a humanitarian crisis: 30 million Sudanese urgently need assistance; over 14 million have been displaced; 7 million are facing acute food insecurity; and there has been horrific sexual violence against women and mass killings.
- c. The outcome of the London Summit, held on 15 April, which included a welcome joint commitment of a further £813 million of funding for Sudan and its neighbours in 2025 - though which represents only a drop in the ocean compared with the scale of the humanitarian catastrophe.
- d. A UK-sponsored motion at the UN Security Council (UNSC) in November 2024 to bring about a ceasefire was shamefully vetoed by Russia.
- e. The alleged role of external actors in supplying arms to the warring parties, including Russia, China, Iran, Türkiye, Serbia and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).
- f. The illicit trade of Sudan's gold is funding the war, enriching foreign actors.
- g. The Biden Administration's declaration that the Rapid Support Forces have committed genocide in Darfur, and its implementation of sanctions against the Sudanese Government for alleged chemical weapons use.
- h. The grievous impact which President Trump's USAID cuts will have on Sudan's humanitarian situation.
- i. In the absence of a political settlement, the instability in Sudan will only contribute to higher levels of migration, creating additional pressures on the UK.
- j. The conflict has received limited coverage in the UK or focus in Parliament, and that the Prime Minister, when asked by Ed Davey about Sudan, agreed that he did not think "we discuss it enough in this House".

Conference believes that:

- I. As penholder at the UNSC on Sudan, the UK has a central role to play to ensure that civilians are protected and that this conflict comes to an end.
- II. Our ability to make a difference has been undermined by decisions to reduce the international development budget from 0.7% of national income, first by the Conservatives while in Government and then, in February 2025, by a Labour Prime Minister.
- III. In the face of competing claims to sovereignty, it is vital not to bestow legitimacy on the warring parties, and a division of Sudan would be a disaster for civilians and should not be entertained as a prospect.
- IV. The continuing flow of arms into Sudan will only perpetuate the conflict.

VI. This conflict has been ignored in the UK and it is up to the Liberal Democrats to ensure that Sudan becomes a diplomatic priority for the Government.

Conference calls on the UK Government to:

1. Use our role as penholder at the UNSC to advance all diplomatic efforts to secure a ceasefire and an agreement on safe zones for civilians.
2. Lead action to set up a Sudan-wide arms embargo to prevent the supply of weapons to the conflict by other countries.
3. Redouble efforts to create a multilateral Contact Group for the crisis.
4. Build consensus amongst international partners to resist attempts to confer legitimacy on the warring parties, and to ensure that those responsible for perpetrating war crimes in the conflict face justice.
5. Affirm that the future governance of Sudan must be under civilian leadership.
6. Raise the public profile of the conflict, including making representations to the Disasters Emergency Committee to start a UK-wide appeal.
7. Work with partners to strengthen due diligence in the global gold trade to crack down on smuggling.
8. Alleviate the humanitarian crisis in Sudan by:
 - a. Properly funding the UN Appeal and the regional refugee response.
 - b. Reversing the planned ODA budget cuts to 0.3% of national income and providing a timeline for restoring the budget to 0.7%, and using it to fund the UK's response to this crisis.
 - c. Providing targeted support for Sudanese children who have been disproportionately impacted and continue to be denied education, health and safety.

5. The future for Palestine and Israel

Submitted by

SAO: Liberal Democrat Friends of Palestine

Conference believes that unless a two-state (Israel – Palestine) solution is secured soon that option will become impossible to deliver. Blocks to a just resolution for both peoples must be overcome. The UK government must urgently move beyond statements and gestures.

Conference affirms the strong policy positions adopted previously, specifically:

1. The Autumn 2021 Federal Conference motion F39, Towards a Lasting Peace, and the Autumn 2024 Federal Conference motion F32, The Israel-Gaza Conflict - an immediate bilateral ceasefire and securing two states.
2. The Liberal Democrat's wholehearted support for universal liberal principles of human rights, democracy, international law, and the self-determination of peoples.

Conference notes:

- I. The failure to justly resolve the Israel-Palestine question fuels extremism, violence and instability throughout the region and beyond.
- II. Israeli and Palestinian civilians are the victims of this impasse, as demonstrated so cruelly by the murderous violence of both the ongoing occupation of Palestinian territories and the attacks of 7th October 2023.
- III. The Palestinian people still have neither freedom, democracy, nor dignity. They have endured horrific suffering over recent decades, as Israel has deepened its illegal occupation of the Palestinian territories, expanded settlements and engaged in forced displacements; as well as the devastation caused by Israel's bombardment of Gaza since October 2023 and the use of starvation as a weapon of war.
- IV. That Israel violated the ceasefire by resuming military operations in March 2025 and renewed its killing of civilians, aid workers, and journalists in Gaza, and has escalated its brutal policy of ethnic cleansing in the West Bank including East Jerusalem.
- V. That Israel's blockade of humanitarian aid into Gaza has caused catastrophic hunger, medical collapse and suffering, with international agencies blocked from delivering life saving supplies; that the only way is to resolve this is to allow full unimpeded access to the UN and aid agencies, and with ending of the militarised aid delivery system that was insufficient, unworkable and dangerous.
- VI. That none of this violent repression has brought lasting security to Israeli civilians from dangers posed by Palestinian and non-Palestinian militants.
- VII. That the International Criminal Court has issued arrest warrants for Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu and former Minister of Defence Yoav Gallant for war crimes and crimes against humanity, whilst other Israeli Ministers have been sanctioned by the UK government. (The three Palestinians who were indicted have subsequently been killed by Israel.)
- VIII. The decision of the International Court of Justice in January 2024 that there are plausible grounds to believe that Israel is committing acts of genocide against Palestinians in

Gaza; and that it ordered Israel to take immediate measures to prevent genocide, punish those who incite genocide and allow in humanitarian aid. That the Israeli government not only failed to take any steps to prevent genocide but has ramped up its activities and its rhetoric, which has led human rights experts to conclude that genocide is being committed.

Conference deplores:

1. That the UK and other western governments have failed to hold Israel to account and have shown complicity in Israel's actions by continuing to supply arms and provide military support to Israel, including by providing training to Israel Defence Forces Personnel and conducting surveillance flights over Gaza.
2. That Hamas has still not released all of the hostages, so cruelly taken on 7th October 2023, and that Israel has increased by thousands the number of Palestinians it has seized from Gaza and the West Bank and unlawfully imprisoned.
3. That successive US governments have encouraged and facilitated the crimes now being conducted and have put pressure on other governments to hold back from taking meaningful steps to prevent the situation escalating.
4. That the UK-Israel Trade and Partnership Agreement remains in effect despite explicitly including respect for human rights as an "essential element" in the agreement.

Conference believes that:

- A. Since Israel has taken no steps to comply with the ICJ's January 2024 demands, provided no evidence to rebut the allegations or address its concerns, continues to be represented by ministers who regularly make unambiguous statements in support of the genocide of Palestinians and has been accused by huge numbers of respected human rights lawyers of committing genocide in the 18 months since the ruling; it is right that we now plainly describe Israel's actions in Gaza as genocidal.
- B. Only a political and diplomatic solution, not a military one, will resolve the future of the Palestinian and Jewish populations of Israel and Palestine in a way that will deliver a lasting justice and peace.
- C. While a two-state solution remains the best way to deliver the dignity and security which Palestinians and Israelis have a right to expect, it is the right of both peoples collectively to decide, if they wish, to alternatively agree to a single democratic state. Regardless of the long-term outcome, the United Kingdom must respect the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to full citizenship, democracy and self-determination.
- D. Hamas must release the remaining hostages held in Gaza, as part of a long term ceasefire agreement that ends all military operations on a permanent basis.
- E. The release of hostages by Hamas must be accompanied by release of the nearly 10,000 Palestinian prisoners currently held in Israeli jails who have not received a fair – or any – trial, in violation of international legal standards.
- F. There is no place in the Liberal Democrats for individuals who defend the unlawful taking of civilian life by State or non-State actors.

Conference calls on the UK Government to:

1. Work to bring about a durable ceasefire and an immediate end to Israel's atrocities in Gaza, including by demanding:
 - a. The release of all remaining hostages held by Hamas and all Palestinian prisoners unlawfully detained by the Israeli authorities.
 - b. The total and permanent cessation of Israeli military operations in Gaza.
 - c. The unrestricted delivery of humanitarian aid through a UN-led corridor, replacing the failed and dangerous US-Israel aid distribution plan.
2. Ensure respect in full for the provisional measures the ICJ ordered in January 2024; respect the July 2024 ICJ advisory opinion on the unlawfulness Israel's occupation of the Palestinian territories, and accordingly:
 - a. Introduce legislation to ban all trade in goods and services with illegal Israeli settlements in the occupied Palestinian territories.
 - b. Sanction any representatives or employees of the Government of Israel supporting or enacting illegal acts proposed or promoted by ministers who have already been sanctioned.
 - c. Immediately suspend the UK-Israel Trade and Partnership Agreement.
 - d. Cease all military and security cooperation with Israel until it brings itself in line with international law. Ban UK citizens from serving in the Israeli military.
 - e. Prosecute British citizens for whom there is credible evidence of their having committed war crimes in Israel/Palestine.
3. Make all possible efforts to ensure that as a State Party to the Rome Statute, the UK upholds its obligations, by arresting individuals who are subject to arrest warrants by the International Criminal Court (ICC), and mobilise other European countries to ensure that international arrest warrants are enforced against individuals entering their territory.
4. Launch a public enquiry along the lines of the Chilcot Inquiry into British government involvement in the affairs of Israel and Palestine, in recent decades.
5. Press for a just and lasting resolution, including by:
 - a. Immediately recognising the state of Palestine based on the 1967 borders with a UK Embassy in East Jerusalem.
 - b. Working to establish an international peace process with mediation carried out by independent third parties under the supervision of the UN Secretary General.
 - c. Working with the international community to facilitate free political activity in Palestine, advocate for the release of potential candidates currently held in Israeli detention and enabling future democratic leaders of Palestine to come forward.
 - d. Encouraging the Palestinian Authority to facilitate elections among Palestinians as soon as possible including in occupied East Jerusalem, using every available pressure to ensure that the Israeli government does not obstruct the process, with a view to uniting Gaza and the West Bank under one democratically elected voice.

6. Making the UK-EU Reset Summit Count

Submitted by

12 Party Members

Conference notes:

- a. Liberal Democrats have been the only voices in Parliament consistently and unashamedly championing closer economic, defence and cultural ties with Europe, following the Conservative's botched deal with the EU.
- b. Liberal Democrats have been pushing for the Labour Government to be much more ambitious in rebuilding our links with the EU, including through:
 - i. Calls for a new, bespoke UK-EU Customs Unions by 2030 which would boost UK growth and cut red-tape for our businesses.
 - ii. Campaigning for new opportunities for our young people to enable them to live, work, and study more easily across Europe.
 - iii. Pushing for a new Rearmament Bank with the EU - backing the proposal from Liberal Democrats Edward Lucas and Guy de Selliers - which would support enhanced financing for defence programmes across the UK and Europe.
- c. Deepening UK-EU economic ties even short of a Customs Union could generate £25 billion a year for the Exchequer, allowing the Government to invest in fixing our NHS, schools and other public services.
- d. After consistent Liberal Democrat pressure, the Government took initial, limited steps to rebuild ties with the EU at May's 'Reset' Summit, enacting Liberal Democrat calls including:
 - i. Agreeing to begin talks on youth mobility.
 - ii. Establishing a new Security and Defence Partnership.
 - iii. Securing a mandate to negotiate a Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures (SPS).

Conference regrets that the Government failed to show real ambition to renew the UK's relations with the EU - as it continues to refuse to entertain the prospect of membership of the Single Market or the Customs Union - and that so little was achieved on other vital issues, including:

- a. A lack of concrete progress on securing an agreement for UK touring artists.
- b. The failure to agree mutual recognition of professional qualifications.
- c. No substantial progress on agreeing UK associate membership of the European Defence Agency (EDA).
- d. The lack of clarity about how the introduction of the EU's Entry/Exit Scheme could lead to severe disruption for UK travellers.

Conference believes the best way to secure closer cooperation with Europe is to ensure that even more Liberal Democrat MPs and Councillors are elected across the country.

Conference further believes that:

I. Strengthening our economic ties with Europe will not only boost growth at home, but also insulate us from President Trump's irrational trade war.

II. Strengthening our security ties with Europe will allow us to reduce our strategic dependence on an unpredictable President Trump and enable us to meet our commitments to NATO, support Ukraine and deter Putin.

Conference reaffirms:

I. The policy recommendations proposed in Motion F14: The UK's Response to Trump (2025) and Motion F13: Rebuilding Trade and Cooperation with Europe (2022).

II. Our four-stage approach to rebuilding our relationship with Europe, and our longer-term objective of UK membership of the EU.

Conference calls on the Government to build on the positive but limited steps taken at the 'Reset Summit, including by:

1. Providing certainty to UK exporters about the timeline for implementing a SPS agreement, and to UK travellers on when they will be able to use airport e-gates across the EU.

2. Immediately beginning talks on agreeing a new, bespoke UK-EU Customs Union, which would cut red tape for businesses across our country and act as an antidote to anaemic economic growth.

3. Moving rapidly to agree a Youth Mobility Scheme, creating vital new opportunities for our young people.

4. Securing association with EU regulatory framework agencies such as the European Chemicals Agency, European Aviation Safety Agency and European Medicines Agency.

5. Agreeing the UK's associate membership of EDA and expanding our engagement with PESCO (Permanent Structured Cooperation) projects.

6. Expanding cooperation over defence-industrial issues between the UK and member states of the EU, NATO and the Joint Expeditionary Force.

7. Committing the UK to join the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Operation Althea, recognising the importance of promoting stability in the Balkans and following the political decision by the Conservatives to withdraw the UK from this mission.

7. The erasure of the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan

Submitted by

14 Party Members

Conference notes:

1. Since the Taliban takeover in 2021 Afghanistan has emerged as one of the most extreme examples of state-enforced oppression of women in the world. Afghanistan is alone in banning girls from secondary schooling and university education, and banning women from most paid work.

2. The Taliban violates the rights of women and girls, including their freedom of speech, expression and movement. Women are banned from most employment; using electronic devices; running or using beauty salons; and visiting public parks and gyms. Women are forbidden to leave home or use public transport without a male guardian; banned from speaking, singing or praying in public; and may not be seen through windows from outside their houses.

3. These measures plus the strict dress code requiring women to thickly cover their bodies and faces in public, are enforced by violent sanctions, including detention. Despite this, women and girls continue to resist.

4. Excluding women and girls from work, education and public life damages Afghanistan's weak economy. Female headed households disproportionately suffer extreme poverty, widespread in Afghanistan. Bans on women's work and girl's education have deepened a severe health worker shortage, restricting critical health services for women. Child marriages and suicides are reported to have increased amongst girls.

5. The Taliban forbids interviews or questions from journalists on women's and girls' rights. In August 2024 the Taliban barred the UN Special Rapporteur on human rights in Afghanistan, Richard Bennett, from entering Afghanistan.

6. Gender persecution is a crime against humanity under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, to which Afghanistan is a State Party.

7. Empowering women and girls is one of four strategic priorities for UK aid, however the budget has been cut.

Conference believes that:

A) All women and girls have the right to equality, and societies flourish where both sexes participate equally in society under the law.

B) The Taliban should face prosecution for gender persecution of women in the International Criminal Court (ICC).

C) The Taliban is answerable to the International Court of Justice for violations of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), which Afghanistan ratified without reservation in 2003.

D) UK should demonstrate its foreign policy position against systemic 'gender apartheid'/ persecution of women, and set global standards to deter future state violations of women and girls' rights.

Conference reaffirms its call for measures to assist Afghan asylum seekers ("Responding to the Crisis in Afghanistan," Autumn 2021), and calls on the UK Government to:

- i) Publicly condemn the actions of the Taliban in violating the rights of women and girls in Afghanistan.
- ii) Call for a UN-mandated accountability mechanism to preserve evidence of crimes committed in Afghanistan against women and girls.
- iii) Work with Netherlands, Canada, Germany and Australia to support ICC and other courts to prosecute Taliban leaders for the persecution of women and girls.
- iv) Restore 0.7% of GNI for international development assistance and restrict UK aid to Afghanistan to programmes with the rights of women and girls as their principal objective.
- v) Ensure international recognition of the Taliban is conditional on meeting global human rights obligations, including the rights of women and girls outlined in CEDAW.
- vi) Support initiatives to enable the participation and voice of Afghan women, including women in the Afghan diaspora.
- vii) Establish a safe, legal pathway to resettlement in UK for Afghan women asylum seekers who have fled the Taliban, especially those who risk being returned to Afghanistan by Pakistan.
- viii) Support the UN request that the Special Rapporteur on human rights in Afghanistan be allowed to enter the country.
- ix) Support sporting boycotts by British teams with men's teams representing Afghanistan where there is no women's team, and allow Afghan sportswomen who have fled Afghanistan to be recognised as a refugee team at the Olympics.
- x) Insist, in international negotiations with the Taliban, that every country represented has equal numbers of men and women decision makers.

Science and Innovation Motions

1. A New Hope for the Space Industry

Submitted by

SAO: Young Liberals

Conference Notes:

I. The importance of the UK space industry to the economy, security, science, technology, exploration, and culture.

II. That space infrastructure underpins essential services such as navigation, communication, weather, climate monitoring, secure assets, and defence.

III. The role that the UK plays in both the research and development of new technologies and the supply chain within the global space industry

IV. Public investment in space yields high economic returns, supporting advanced manufacturing and delivering a strong multiplier effect.

V. Every £1 invested in space generates £9.80 in industry value and wider economic benefits, according to March 2025 Government figures.

VI. Space technologies, particularly Earth Observation, are crucial in addressing the climate emergency.

VII. The space sector aligns with the Liberal Democrat manifesto commitment to harnessing new technologies for the public good.

VIII. UK investments in spaceports in Scotland and Cornwall position the nation as Europe's leading destination for commercial space launches, with significant global potential.

VIII. Space technology bolsters UK leadership in science, communications, and cyber security, ensuring protection of critical assets, infrastructure, and data.

Conference Believes:

A. The UK risks falling behind global competitors such as the US, China, and Russia, as well as European nations, in space capabilities. Brexit has heightened the need for independent satellite infrastructure, given exclusion from EU initiatives like Galileo. The potential economic loss from GNSS failure is estimated at £5.2bn over five days.

B. Independent UK launch capabilities are vital for fulfilling security and defence needs.

C. SKYNET, a UK Ministry of Defence program providing strategic satellite communication services to the UK Armed Forces and allies, is crucial to national security.

D. The UK's strengths in advanced technologies such as 5G, AI, IoT, and quantum computing are synergistic with space investment, benefiting businesses and citizens.

E. Cleaning up "Space Junk", or Active Debris Removal (ADR), is of growing importance to the space industry, and UK based companies should play a leading role in supporting ADR.

F. International collaboration in space, particularly through the European Space Agency (ESA), is an invaluable platform for shared missions and innovation.

G. Public engagement, exemplified by Tim Peake's mission, inspires the next generation in STEM, enhancing the UK's science and technology workforce.

Conference Calls For:

- i. The UK government to immediately review and renew the 2021 National Space Strategy, with the central focus of incentivising international investment, fostering industry growth, and people-centred, efficient regulation.
- ii. Government to conduct a review of private spaceport initiatives in Scotland, Cornwall, Hubs like the Harwell Science and Innovation Campus and other locations to ensure continued attention is paid to establishing the UK as a global space hub.
- iii. The UK Government to designate the space industry as a 'strategic industry' for the purpose of the National Wealth Fund's investment, paving the way for productive investment in areas including:
- iv. A UK satellite navigation system to ensure resilience and independence, addressing gaps left by Brexit and Galileo exclusion.
- v. Quantum communications, satellites, advanced materials, optical infrastructure, and computing to secure UK leadership in emerging technologies.
- vi. Efforts to establish guidance and schemes for industry to better support inclusion for underrepresented groups, in particular people with disabilities, women and ethnic minorities, mimicking and building on schemes like the Women in Finance Charter (HM Treasury) and the Business in the Community Race at Work Charter (Department for Business and Trade)

Transport Motions

1. Connecting Communities - Building a Transport Network Fit for the 21st Century

Submitted by

10 Party Members

Conference notes that:

- I. Rail fares rose by 3.8% in 2022, 5.9% in 2023, 4.9% in 2024 and 4.6% in 2025.
- II. The government has begun to bring rail operators into public ownership, with Transport Secretary Heidi Alexander saying she “would love to be able” to guarantee lower fares.
- III. Rail electrification is at a standstill and proposed new lines such as East-West Rail are not planned to be fully electrified.
- IV. The Conservatives in government promised but failed to establish Great British Railway (GBR) - and the Labour government expects GBR to be operational in 2027 at the earliest.
- V. The Conservative’s cancellation of the second phase of High Speed 2 (HS2) significantly undermined public confidence in the UK’s ability to deliver such projects on time and on budget.
- VI. The Labour government cancelled the Restoring Your Railway programme, which sought to reverse the devastating impacts of the Beeching cuts.
- VII. Liberal Democrats champion passenger standards and successfully worked to ensure that an independent body will be established to monitor the impact of the Passenger Railway Services (Public Ownership) Act 2024 on passenger standards.

Conference believes that:

- A. Getting rail back on track as a reliable, affordable and convenient form of transport, is critical to a thriving economy, healthier living and equality.
- B. There is still a place for the private sector in the operation of rail services; renationalising the railways will not automatically make fares cheaper or improve passenger experience and the government has no clear plan to improve reliability or make fares more affordable.
- C. Trains are not working properly for passengers; people are paying more for poorer services, and our rail ticketing system is over-complicated.
- D. Rail freight is the most carbon-friendly way to move goods and helps to make air cleaner.
- E. Devolved rail services tend to be more reliable, have easier to understand fares, higher customer satisfaction, and are better integrated with other public transport.
- F. The UK should learn from our European neighbours, embracing on-rail competition between operators and competitive tendering to increase services, deliver newer trains, grow passenger numbers, and reduce subsidies.

Conference reaffirms pledges to:

- i. Freeze rail fares this year and overhaul rail fares to offer passengers the best value for their journey.
- ii. Deliver Northern Powerhouse Rail to connect cities across the North of England.
- iii. Review the Conservative government's cancellation of HS2's leg to Manchester with a view to reversal or alternative delivery in whatsoever way provides value for money: by encouraging private investment, and ensuring work on the station at Euston resumes without further delays, with level boarding for all platforms.
- iv. Re-invigorate the Access for All (AfA) programme.
- v. Implement light rail schemes for trams and tram-trains.
- vi. Introduce a national freight strategy which includes the electrification of freight routes.
- vii. Introduce an international rail strategy to support new routes and operators, and permitting other operators to use the Channel Tunnel and HS1.

Conference resolves to put passengers first and:

1. Establish nationwide tap-in tap-out ticketing.
2. Introduce automatic compensation for cancellations and delays across all operators and ticketing systems.
3. Establish digital connectivity standards on rail routes.
4. Extend the planned "Best Price Guarantee" across all digital and physical sales channels to ensure passengers are offered the most cost-effective ticket.
5. Create a statutory duty on accessibility for the railway.
6. Ensure new rail lines are electrified as standard and set clear targets to accelerate the electrification of track alongside the use of battery and hydrogen in appropriate parts of the network.
7. Work with national and local government on a new Liverpool to Manchester rail connection.
8. Ensure the frequency of late night rail services return to pre-covid levels.
9. Mandate that public rights of way for walking, wheeling and cycling are built alongside new railway lines, as well as improving existing railway active travel routes and transforming more disused railway lines into public rights of way.
10. Reverse the cuts to Restoring Your Railway.

Conference commits to hold the government to account by making sure:

- a. The Office of Rail and Road (ORR) maintains control of a transparent and fair access regime to encourage the growth of open access and rail freight. In addition, the ORR should be given powers to hold GBR to account for infrastructure and train company performance, including cancellations and punctuality.
- b. The Passenger Standards Authority should be established quickly to monitor standards.

Work, Social Security and Pensions Motions

1. Safe and welcoming workplaces for people who are neurodivergent

Submitted by

13 Party Members

Conference notes:

I. Just 31% of people with a neurodiversity condition are in employment compared to 54.7% of disabled people overall

II. Some neurodiverse people struggle with the social cues and expectations of traditional recruitment processes, making it difficult to present themselves effectively

III. Even when employed, individuals with neurodiversity may face challenges due to a lack of understanding and support from colleagues and managers, and are more likely to experience workplace bullying

VI. Neurodivergent people with other medical issues and additional disabilities face even greater challenges

V. The UK government has recently announced major changes to the welfare system, including £1bn of employment support measures to help disabled and long-term sick people back into work

VI. Without top-down changes to change workplace culture, there could be serious, far-reaching impacts to the mental health of neurodivergent people.

Conference believes:

A. We must do far more to tackle barriers to work for neurodivergent people, including by providing more support for employers to change the way they view neurodivergence

B. With the right support, neurodivergent people can thrive in the workplace

C. Organisations with a more diverse workforce are more likely to innovate and succeed.

Conference calls on the UK government to:

i. To hold employers to account in ensuring recruitment and workplace policies support neurodivergent people

ii. Provide better training for employers on inclusive practices, including creating an environment where neurodiverse people feel comfortable to raise concerns about harassment and bullying

iii. Provide more practical guidance on reasonable adjustments and good practice informed by the NHS and other relevant experts

- iv. Support employers to change recruitment practices including inclusive job advertisements, flexible interview processes, and training for all interviewers
- v. Encourage employers to undertake Occupational Health Assessments at the start of employment so that new employees with neurodivergence are well-supported.

2. A fair deal for welfare and disability

Submitted by

12 Party Members

Conference believes that:

- I. Everyone should be able to live independently and with dignity, and support must be in place to ensure that vulnerable people and their carers can live their best possible lives.
- II. We must create an inclusive economy, where everyone is empowered to make the most of their potential, pursue their ambitions and live a fulfilling life.

Conference notes that:

- A. Under the previous Conservative Government, we saw a sharp increase in the number of people who were economically inactive due to long-term illness, from less than 2.1 million in 2019 to more than 2.8 million in 2024, and Government spending on incapacity and disability benefits rose from £34 billion a year in 2019-20 to £51bn in 2024-25.
- B. Spending on incapacity and disability benefits is expected to rise further to nearly £60 billion a year by the end of the decade, an increase of around ¾ compared to 2019.
- C. The rising welfare bill is a result of deeper underlying challenges, including poor physical health, significant increases in mental ill-health, particularly among young people, and a higher number of people not in education, employment or training (NEET).

Conference notes with concern that the Government's Universal Credit and Personal Independence Payment Bill fails to address the underlying causes of rising welfare expenditure and instead makes things worse by:

- a. Making it harder for disabled people who are already employed to remain in work, by cutting Personal Independence Payments (PIP), which cover help with essential daily tasks such as washing and preparing meals.
- b. Withdrawing support for people who are simply unable to work due to chronic health issues or disabilities.
- c. Removing Carers Allowance from 150,000 unpaid carers, whose tireless work supports some of the most vulnerable in society and fills the gaps of health and care systems.
- d. Leaving the NHS, social care and local government facing additional cost pressures likely resulting in a false economy.
- e. Pushing an additional 250,000 people into poverty, including 50,000 children, by 2029-30.

Conference reaffirms Liberal Democrat commitments to:

- i. Making it easier for disabled people to access the world of work, including by raising employers' awareness of the Access to Work scheme, and making the scheme fit for purpose, such as by simplifying and speeding up the application process.
- ii. Tackling the disability employment gap by implementing a targeted strategy to support disabled people into work, with specialist disability employment support.
- iii. Adopting a more inclusive, less transactional approach to welfare policy, by giving disabled people and organisations representing them a stronger voice in the design of the benefits policies and processes that affect them.

Conference therefore resolves to oppose the Government's plans to cut support for disabled people and unpaid carers, and instead calls on ministers to properly tackle the rising welfare bill by:

1. Ending the crisis in our NHS and social care, starting by committing to conclude the social care review by the end of 2025, not in three years' time.
2. Ensuring that health problems can be addressed early before they become long-term conditions, by investing in public health and primary care and ensuring that everyone can see a GP within seven days.
3. Expanding early access to mental health support, especially for young people, to tackle a key driver of economic inactivity - by establishing mental health hubs for young people in every community and introducing regular mental health check-ups at key points in people's lives, when they are most vulnerable to mental ill-health.
4. Improving preventative health services, from drug and alcohol services, to children's health services, to stop chronic conditions from ever developing, by raising the public health grant.
5. Ensuring that disabled people's money can go further, mitigating the need for welfare support, by offering low-income households free insulation and heat pumps and cutting their energy bill through a social tariff.
6. Giving every disabled person the right to work from home if they want to, unless there are significant business reasons why it is not possible.
7. Building on Charlie Mayfield's upcoming review into how government and businesses can work together to support ill and disabled people in employment, working with employers to make the world of work more inclusive.
8. Enabling carers to balance work and caring responsibilities by introducing an earnings taper to end the unfair Carers' Allowance cliff-edge

Miscellaneous Motions

1. Leading the Way

Submitted by

Federal Policy Committee

Conference reaffirms that the Liberal Democrats exist to build and safeguard a fair, free and open society, in which we seek to balance the fundamental values of liberty, equality and community, and in which no one shall be enslaved by poverty, ignorance or conformity.

Conference notes the many great strengths of the United Kingdom, from the people working in the NHS to our world-leading creative industries, from great British farmers to our soft power on the world stage.

However, Conference also notes the enormous challenges facing the UK today, including:

- A. A cost of living crisis, high and rising levels of poverty, and anaemic economic growth.
- B. The crisis in the NHS and social care, including a lack of access to GPs and dentists, ambulance delays, long hospital waiting lists, and millions of people missing out on care.
- C. The twin climate and nature crises, with the UK off track on its emissions targets, one in six species threatened with extinction from Britain, and air pollution claiming tens of thousands of lives every year.
- D. Water companies getting away with pumping filthy sewage into our rivers and lakes and onto our beaches.
- E. A housing crisis, with a shortage of affordable and social housing and shamefully high levels of homelessness.
- F. Prejudice, discrimination and entrenched inequalities blighting too many people's lives – including women, LGBT+ people, people of ethnic and religious minorities, and disabled people.
- G. Communities plagued by burglaries, fraud, anti-social behaviour, serious youth violence and violence against women and girls, while far too many criminals evade justice and go on to reoffend.
- H. Rural communities let down by a lack of access to local public services, decent public transport, affordable housing, adequate broadband connectivity, or protection from crime; and family farmers undermined by both Conservative and Labour Governments.
- I. A badly broken immigration system, an enormous asylum backlog, dangerous Channel crossings, a lack of safe and legal routes to sanctuary, and no public confidence.
- J. A political system that has been fundamentally broken for generations, leaving millions feeling powerless and excluded.

- K. Strong global headwinds, including instability and conflict, climate change, the risks and challenges of social media and artificial intelligence, threats from Putin's Russia and Xi's China, and Donald Trump's erratic and unpredictable presidency.

Conference believes that things can get better – the UK has overcome big challenges before and can do it again now. Liberal Democrats have led the way before, from investing in education to legalising same-sex marriage, tackling climate change to promoting human rights.

Conference further believes that the Liberal Democrats must again lead the way to a fair, free and open society where:

- i. Everyone has the chance to succeed and see their hard work and aspiration properly rewarded, and extremes of inequality are eliminated.
- ii. Everyone's rights are respected, and individuals and communities are properly empowered.
- iii. Every child gets a good education and has real opportunities to flourish.
- iv. Businesses and entrepreneurs are supported to create growth and jobs in every part of the UK.
- v. Everyone receives the care they need when they are ill or frail, and a helping hand when they fall on tough times.
- vi. Everyone can afford to live in a decent home somewhere safe and clean, with a comfortable retirement when the time comes.
- vii. Everyone can enjoy the benefits of our wonderful natural environment, and our children inherit the healthy planet they deserve.
- viii. The UK stands tall in a safer world, working with our neighbours, allies and partners to champion the values of equality, democracy, human rights and the rule of law.

Conference reaffirms that the Liberal Democrat response to the challenges we face will always be rooted in the values we share: freedom, equality, community, internationalism, human rights, environmentalism and democracy.

While recognising that there is still more to do, Conference further notes that the party already has bold, comprehensive policies to:

- a. Fix the crisis in social care and support unpaid carers.
- b. Tackle the climate and nature crises, and stop the sewage scandal.
- c. Tackle the housing crisis so that everyone, in every part of the country, can afford to live in a good-quality home.
- d. Support families, protect children's rights and wellbeing, and invest in education.
- e. Tackle the skills shortage and support universities in the face of extreme financial pressure.
- f. Respect and defend the rights of people of all races, religions, sexual orientations and gender identities.
- g. Build a fair, effective immigration system that treats everyone with dignity and respect, while preventing dangerous Channel crossings and combating people smuggling, human trafficking and modern slavery.

- h. Fix the UK's broken relationship with Europe with a four-step roadmap towards membership of the Single Market, including negotiating a new UK-EU customs union by 2030 at the latest.

Conference therefore endorses policy paper XXX, *Leading the Way*, as a strategic, focussed and ambitious programme for renewing our policy in the years ahead, including the following areas as priorities for further policy development in this Parliament:

1. Turning the economy around and making sure everyone feels the benefits of growth equitably.
2. Supporting start-ups and scale-ups, small and growing businesses, entrepreneurs and the self-employed.
3. Improving primary healthcare, with a focus on early access and shifting more healthcare out of hospitals and into communities.
4. Taking a strategic approach to improving health and care more broadly.
5. Making sure policing, the justice system and other public services work better for victims of crime.
6. Empowering consumers in relation to public services, utility companies, arms-length government bodies, and businesses.
7. Defending and strengthening British democracy.
8. Empowering local communities so that residents and community groups have far more control over the decisions that affect their local areas.
9. Helping rural communities to thrive by tackling the distinctive challenges they face.
10. Reviewing and updating the party's international security strategy in light of the world as it is today.

Conference believes that policy development should always put our Liberal Democrat values into practice, and take forward our distinctive commitment to put real power in people's hands and hold the already powerful properly to account.

Business Motions

1. Membership subscriptions and Federal Levy

Submitted by

Federal Board

Conference agrees:

1. To continue to freeze the existing minimum membership rate of £15, except for members from before 2022 for whom it shall remain £12.
2. To continue to freeze the £6 minimum for those in receipt of or entitled to state benefits, and the £6 minimum for members of the Young Liberals.
3. To continue to freeze the £3 minimum 1 year introductory rate for members directly recruited by the Young Liberals.
4. That nothing in this motion shall prevent a State Party from setting via their internal procedures higher recommended or minimum subscription rates or from introducing additional concessionary rates.
5. That nothing in this motion shall prevent the Federal Party from running membership recruitment pilots that involve different minimum membership rates, provided that any individual pilot is for a period of one year or less and that the pilots take into account any knock-on financial impacts on other parts of the party.
6. That the Federal Levy shall remain 50 per cent.

2. Increased use of online debates

Submitted by

Local Party: Harrow Borough

Conference notes that:

I. Some motions that FCC considers are worth debating at Spring and Autumn Federal Party Conferences are not debated there solely due to time constraints at these conferences.

II. Extending Spring and Autumn conferences to allow sufficient time to debate these motions is not a practical solution.

III. When circumstances dictated that in-person conferences could not be held during the Covid pandemic, the Party successfully held these conferences online and that this led to the present hybrid conferences with in-person and online attendees.

Conference believes that:

A. Debating policy that originates from sources outside of the FPC Working Parties is important for Liberal Democracy.

B. Inviting the proposers of motions that could not be debated solely because of time constraints to resubmit them for a future conference wastes both member and FCC time.

C. The increased use of online debates would allow debates on motions where there is insufficient time at present for them to be debated during the existing conferences.

Conference calls on FCC to consult with other relevant Party bodies and bring forward proposals to introduce additional opportunities for policy debates to be held online outside of the Spring and Autumn Conferences for those motions where FCC currently invites the proposer to resubmit the motion to a future conference.

3. Reviewing the role of President

Submitted by

10 Party Members

Conference believes that allowing the post of Party President to be held on a job-share basis by two people might increase the number of individuals able to stand for the role and enhance the diversity of those standing for election.

Conference therefore requests the Federal Board to carry out a review into the feasibility of the role being carried out as a job share, taking into account the views of the Leader, previous incumbents, candidates for the role, and Party members, and, if appropriate, to bring recommendations to Conference for Constitutional change.

Constitutional Amendments

1. Federal Council: decision-making by majority vote

Submitted by

17 Party Members

PROPOSED CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT

Amend the final sentence of Federal Constitution, Article 9.16 to read:

Any decision of the Federal Board called in can be overturned by a vote in favour by a majority of the Federal Council members present at the meeting and provided the number voting in favour is at least 13.

CURRENT TEXT OF THE CONSTITUTION

Current text:

9.16 The members of the Federal Council shall be sent the Board agenda, decisions and relevant papers. Within five working days of the publication of the decisions any 13 members can request that the Chair of the Federal Council call in any decision by the Federal Board to a meeting of the full Federal Council.

The President of the Party will be required to attend this meeting and can bring any others they feel relevant in order to speak in favour of the decision. Any decision of the Federal Board called in can be overturned by a vote in favour by at least 27 members of the Federal Council.

2. Diversity Quotas and the Equality Act 2010

Submitted by

40 Party Members

Conference notes that:

- A. The Equality Act 2010 applies to political parties as private associations. Moreover, equality is a fundamental value of our party.
- B. Section 101 of the Act says a party must not discriminate in how its members are afforded access to a benefit, facility or service. This includes e.g. when conducting elections to party committees.
- C. Candidates win elections by gaining the most votes. Exceptionally, results can only be adjusted where this is lawful. Under Section 158 of the Act any “positive action” — e.g. to change election results — must have an objective justification based on a protected characteristic, such as sex, race or disability. However, Article 2.5 of our Constitution does not meet this requirement, as it uses arbitrary terms that are not protected characteristics. ‘Self-identification’ is not recognised in law. Returning males into vacancies expressly reserved for females would be unlawful.
- D. Article 2.7 in our Constitution states that where a party rule appears to conflict with the Equality Act, the provisions of that Act shall prevail.
- E. The UK Supreme Court has recently concluded that the use of “man”, “woman”, and “sex” under the Equality Act were “always intended” to refer only to “biological sex”. It further stated that any other interpretation would cause the Act to be incoherent and impracticable to operate.
- F. The Equalities & Human Rights Commission (EHRC) has stated that the Equality Act, as clarified by the Supreme Court, has effect and is binding, and so organisations must, where necessary, amend policies, criteria and practices as appropriate and not wait for further guidance.
- G. In our party, women are underrepresented on key governance bodies. For example, the Federal Council (40 members) and English Council (162 members) have approximately twice as many men as women. Thus there is a statutory justification for a positive action of maintaining a quota for women on our internal committees. The 40 percent quota in Article 2.5 is applied to six counts in five committees and up to 23 candidates among 60 committee places for three-year terms.

Conference therefore agrees to delete Article 2.5 and replace with:

Whenever this Constitution provides for the election by party members to a Federal Committee, not less than 40% or, if 40% is not a whole number, the whole number nearest to but not exceeding 40% of those elected shall be men, and shall be women, respectively.

This section is for reference only for the Federal Conference Committee and does not form part of the motion.

Article 2.5 (current wording)

2.5 Whenever this Constitution provides for the election by party members to a Federal Committee, not less than 40% or, if 40% is not a whole number, the whole number nearest to but not exceeding 40% of those elected shall self-identify as men or non-binary people, and self-identify as women or non-binary people respectively.

Article 2.4 (unchanged)

2.4 The provisions of this Constitution shall be implemented with regard to the principle that men and women shall have an equal opportunity of participating at every level of the Party, subject to the provisions of the Equality Act 2010.

3. Constitutional tidy-up

Submitted by

Federal Committee: Federal Board

Conference notes the section of the Federal Board's report to Conference that explains the rationale for each part of this motion.

Following previous changes made to the Federal Constitution and other party procedures and organisational policies, Conference agrees to:

1. In Article 3.6, insert “, Mayor candidate” before “member of a local authority”;
2. Add at end of Article 8.5, “d. For those party members who the Board appoints to other committees, the Board may make a temporary new appointment where the previously appointed person wishes to take caring or compassionate leave or where the person has been suspended from the party.”;
3. In Article 8.6 delete, "The Federal Board shall also have regard to the desirability of establishing a subcommittee responsible for the co-ordination of the Party's activities.";
4. Add new Article 20.2: “Where this constitution makes the President a member of a Committee of the Federal Party other than the Federal Board, the President may nominate from among other Board members a substitute if they are unable to attend a meeting. The substitute shall have the same voting rights at the meeting as the President would otherwise have.”;
5. Delete Article 21.7(c) and remove “; and” from (b), replacing with a full stop; and
6. Delete the Annexe to the Constitution.

To provide greater clarity to parts of the Constitution, Conference agrees to:

1. In Article 3.2(d), replace “that the Federal Board considers ought to be entitled” with “to which the Federal Board has granted the power”;
2. In Article 8.4, replace “other than those individually specified in the constitution” with “other than those required to be a member of it because they are the sole holder of a post listed in the Constitution as a member of the committee”; and
3. In Article 9.9(c), insert “non-casual” before “vacancy”.

To ensure the party's finances can continue in an orderly manner if an Autumn Conference has to be cancelled or postponed, Conference agrees to:

1. In Article 12.6, replace "FB" with “Federal Board” in both places, and delete both "each year" and "for the ensuing year".

In addition, to clarify various rules around holding posts in the party, and to allow the Federal Board to discharge its existing responsibilities to fill posts by using more widely an appointment process involving interviews followed by a Board decision, rather than Board members simply voting between names without information from interviews, Conference agrees to:

1. In Article 2.8, renumber existing text as (a), replace the full stop at the end with “; and”, and add at the end “(b) Where this Constitution requires someone to hold a particular post or type of post, either within or outside the party, in order to qualify for election or appointment

to a role then, after their appointment or election, they shall be considered to have resigned from that role if they cease to hold the post or type of post, unless the Constitution expressly states otherwise.”

2. In Article 8.5(c), replace “elects” with “appoints” and “elected” with “appointed”;
3. In Article 12.2(h) and 14.3(d), replace "elected" with "appointed" and replace second sentence with “Casual vacancies amongst this group shall be filled in the same way”;
4. In Article 13.2(i)(a), replace "elected" with "appointed";
5. In Article 16.3(a), add at end “or during their term as a member of the committee”; and
6. In Article 20.5, replace "elected" with "appointed" and “election” with “appointment”.

Conference recognises that the Leader of the Party and the Leaders of the Party in Scotland and Wales are in practice the main public spokespeople for the party, and therefore agrees to:

1. In Article 20.1, replace "shall be the principal public representative of the Party and" with “shall be the voice of party members and”.

Following Britain’s departure from the European Union, Conference also agrees to:

1. In Article 1.2(c) and 4.5(a), replace "UK Members of the European Parliament" with "members of devolved bodies”;
2. In Article 2.3(c), delete "and European Parliamentary”;
3. In Article 3.6, delete "MEP," and "or European parliamentary”;
4. In Article 6.5, delete "the Parliamentary Party in the European Parliament”;
5. In Article 9.6, delete "for the European Parliament and”;
6. In Article 10.1(a), replace "the European community" with "Europe”;
7. In Article 10.3, delete "and its manifesto for elections to the European Parliament" and "and with the Parliamentary Party in the European Parliament”;
8. In Article 13.3, delete "and the European Parliament”;
9. In Article 13.5, change “Westminster and European Parliaments” to “House of Commons”;
10. In Article 15.1(d), delete "campaigning for European Parliament elections and”;
11. Delete Article 15.2(i)(e);
12. Delete Article 17.4;
13. In Article 19.1, change “Westminster and European Parliaments” to “House of Commons”; and
14. Delete Article 19.8.

Conference further believes in neatness and tidiness and therefore agrees to:

1. In Article 3.5, move “and” from the end of 3.5(ii) to (iii), replacing the full stop with a semicolon;

2. In Article 6.1, change “but others may be invited to attend in a non-voting role, including Registered Supporters” to “but others, including Registered Supporters, may be invited to attend in a non-voting role”;
3. In Article 6.2, - add “s” at the end of the last word;
4. Reformat Article 8.1 as a list;
5. In Articles 8.6, 8.11 and 9.3, add a hyphen to “subcommittee” and “subcommittees” where these words appear;
6. In Articles 8.8c, 9.3 and 13.2(ii)(a), insert "Federal" before "Chief Executive";
7. In both Article 13.1 and 14.1, replace "accountable" with "responsible" and delete "and shall report to each ordinary meeting of the Board";
8. In Article 15.3, add a full stop at the end;
9. In Article 19.4(j)((ii), add "and" at the end; and
10. Renumber the Constitution and cross-references as otherwise required by the changes in this motion.

4. Election of State Party reps to some Federal Cttees

Submitted by

10 Party Members

Constitutional Amendment , State Party reps on certain Federal Committees

Article 9.12 (b)

Currently :

b. Three members from each State Party, elected according to their own procedures;

Delete “elected according to their own procedures;” and replace with :

“elected by all members of each State Party according to their own procedures”

Article 10.2 (f)

Currently :

“one representative of each State Party, elected by its internal procedures (State Parties may appoint a substitute member should the elected member be unable to attend a specific meeting of the FPC)”

Delete: “elected by its internal procedures” and replace with :

“elected by all members of each State Party according to their own procedures”

Article 11.2 (c)

Currently :

“one representative of each State Party, elected by its internal procedures (State Parties may appoint a substitute member should the elected member be unable to attend a specific meeting of the FCC) “

Delete:

“elected by its internal procedures” and replace with :

““elected by all members of each State Party according to their own procedures”

Article 15.2 (c)

Currently : “one person elected by each State Party according to its internal procedures;”

Delete:

“Party according to its internal procedures”

And replace with:

“elected by all members of each State Party according to their own procedures”

These changes to come in to effect for vacancies after September 2028.

Standing Order Amendments

1. Amendment to Standing Order 1.3 b)

Submitted by

31 Party Members

Conference notes that

- i) An amendment to change either the Constitution or Conference Standing Orders requires a two-thirds majority to pass, a higher threshold than the simple majority required for business motions;
- ii) The rules on submitting Constitutional or Standing Order amendments are the same as for business motions, including a provision that they can be submitted by 10 party members;
- iii) Conference Standing Orders require all validly submitted constitutional amendments and amendments to Standing Orders to be accepted for debate, save for the limited exceptions listed in standing order 4.3, whereas Federal Conference Committee has the ability to determine which business motions are selected for debate.

Conference therefore agrees to amend Standing Order 1.3 b), to add at the end:

“save that constitutional amendments and secondary constitutional amendments, and standing order amendments and secondary standing order amendments submitted by party members shall require 30 signatures of members from at least 3 local parties.”

Standing Order 1.3 b) will then read (changes in bold):

Business motions (including amendments and emergency business motions and amendments), constitutional amendments and secondary constitutional amendments, and standing order amendments and secondary standing order amendments may be submitted by the Federal Board, Federal Policy Committee, Federal Council, Federal Conference Committee, state parties, regional parties in England, local parties, Affiliated Organisations and 10 party members, save that constitutional amendments and secondary constitutional amendments, and standing order amendments and secondary standing order amendments submitted by party members shall require 30 signatures of members from at least 3 local parties.

2. Reporting to conference: constitutional and SO amendments

Submitted by

Federal Conference Committee

Conference believes that maintaining the accountability of federal committees to federal conference, through written reports, opportunities for members to question the committees and votes to accept or reject each report, is an essential element of party democracy.

Conference notes, however, that:

- a) Reports sessions in the auditorium can allow only a limited time for questions to each committee.
- b) Many questions to committees, particularly those simply asking for information, do not necessarily have to be asked at conference.
- c) The treatment of the reporting function in the constitution is incoherent and in places contradictory.

Conference therefore resolves to reform the system of reporting to conference, in order to:

- A. Retain accountability to conference for those bodies which include a component directly elected by the party membership (Federal Board, Federal Conference Committee, Federal Council, Federal International Relations Committee, Federal Policy Committee and Vice President responsible for working with ethnic minorities), plus the parliamentary parties in the Commons and Lords.
- B. Ensure that committees elected by and accountable to the Federal Board (Federal Audit and Scrutiny Committee, Federal Campaigns and Elections Committee, Federal Finance and Resources Committee, Federal People Development Committee, Joint States Candidates Committee), plus the Campaign for Gender Balance and the Racial Diversity Campaign, report through the Federal Board.
- C. Allow for additional opportunities to put questions to all the bodies listed in paragraphs A and B away from the conference auditorium.
- D. Increase the time available for debates on policy motions at spring conference.
- E. Rationalise the treatment of reporting in the constitution.

Accordingly, Conference:

- 1. Agrees to adopt the amendments to the constitution set out below.
- 2. Instructs the Federal Conference Committee to organise additional question-and-answer sessions, without the need for a formal report or vote, including for the two parliamentary parties at spring conference (in addition to their formal report to autumn conference) and for all committees and sub-committees, on a rolling basis, away from the conference auditorium (to allow for greater interaction with members).

3. Instructs the Federal Board to review and improve mechanisms to allow party members to interact with committees throughout the year outside conference.
4. Instructs the Federal Conference Committee to review the impacts of these changes after two years.

Existing constitution	Proposed amendment
3.3 The Federal Party shall operate and administer a Registered Supporter Scheme, open to those who wish to support the Party's work without joining as a member. Except where otherwise dictated by this Constitution or those of the State Parties, the regulations governing the Registered Supporter Scheme shall be made by and administered on behalf of the Federal People Development Committee, notified to the Conference and published on the Party website.	<i>Delete:</i> ' , notified to the Conference'
5.3 The Federal Board shall provide a report on its implementation of the strategy over the preceding year and its plans for implementing the strategy over the coming year, including all relevant activities and plans of the Federal Policy Committee, Federal Conference Committee, Federal Finance & Resources Committee, the Federal Communications & Elections Committee, the Federal People Development Committee, Federal International Relations Committee and the Federal Audit & Scrutiny Committee, as part of its report to each conference following that in which the strategy is agreed.	<i>Add at start of article:</i> 'As part of its report to conference, '

Existing constitution	Proposed amendment
6.5 There shall be a business session at each Conference, to which the Parliamentary Party in the House of Commons, the Parliamentary party in the House of Lords, the Parliamentary Party in the European Parliament, the Federal Board, the Federal Policy Committee, Federal Communications and Elections Committee, Federal International Relations Committee, the Federal Council, and the Federal Conference Committee shall report. The business session at the autumn meeting shall constitute the Annual General Meeting of the Party, before which the Annual Report and Accounts shall additionally be laid. The Conference shall have the right to approve or reject each such report, or to refer it back with recommendations. Business motions may be submitted to the Federal Conference by the Federal Board, the Federal Conference Committee or any other persons or bodies entitled to submit motions or amendments under Article 7.6.	<i>Delete article and insert:</i> 6.5 There shall be a business session or sessions at each Conference, to which the committees listed in Article 8.7 shall report. The business session at each autumn Conference shall additionally include reports from the Parliamentary Party in the House of Commons, the Parliamentary Party in the House of Lords and the Vice President responsible for working with ethnic minorities. The business session at the autumn meeting shall constitute the Annual General Meeting of the Party, before which the Annual Report and Accounts shall be laid as part of the report of the Federal Board. The Conference shall have the right to approve or reject each such report, or to refer it back with recommendations. Other reports may be circulated for information. 6.6 Business motions may be submitted to the Federal Conference by the Federal Board, the Federal Conference Committee or any other persons or bodies entitled to submit motions or amendments under Article 7.6.

Existing constitution	Proposed amendment
8.7 The Federal Board, the Federal Conference Committee and the Federal Policy Committee shall each table a written report at each meeting of the Conference, with time given at the conference to debate each report. All other Committees shall report to the Conference as part of the Federal Board's report.	<i>Delete article and insert:</i> 8.7 The Federal Board, the Federal Conference Committee and the Federal Policy Committee shall each table a written report at each meeting of the Conference. The Federal International Relations Committee and the Federal Council shall each table a written report at each autumn meeting of the Conference. Time will be given at the Conference to debate each report. All other Committees shall report to the Conference as part of the Federal Board's report. In exceptional circumstances any Committee may request the Federal Conference Committee to permit it to submit a written report and allocate time to debate it.
9.6 Following each election for the European Parliament and the House of Commons, the Federal Board shall commission a report on the Party's work in that election and shall report to the Party on the outcomes of that review. It shall report on its work, including the work of all committees and other bodies responsible to it, to each meeting of the Conference.	<i>Delete first sentence and insert:</i> Following each election for the House of Commons, the Federal Board shall commission a report on the Party's work in that election and shall report to the Party on the outcomes of that review as part of its report to the Conference.
9.17 The Council shall be considered to be a Committee of the Federal Party for the purposes of Articles 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 8.2, 8.5, 8.8 and 8.9.	<i>Add, after '8.5': '8.7, '</i>
10.1 ... The FPC shall submit an annual report for approval or amendment to Conference at its autumn meeting on its programme of policy development.	<i>Delete sentence and insert:</i> The FPC shall include its proposed programme of policy development in its report to the Conference.
20.1 ... The President shall report to the annual meeting of the Conference and may make reports to any other meetings of Conference. ...	<i>Delete sentence</i>

Existing constitution	Proposed amendment
Standing orders 1.1 What is on the agenda The agenda for each meeting of conference, other than a special conference, shall include time for: ... b) A business session or sessions for the consideration of reports from the Parliamentary Parties as listed in Article 6.5 of the Federal Party's Constitution, the Federal Board, the Federal Policy Committee, Federal Communications and Elections Committee, Federal International Relations Committee, Federal Council, and the Federal Conference Committee together with, when appropriate, reports from any other body the Committee considers appropriate, accounts, the annual report, a motion accompanying the proposed strategy of the party, business motions, constitutional amendments and standing order amendments; ...	<i>Delete 1.1.(b) and insert:</i> b) A business session or sessions for the consideration of reports from the bodies listed in Article 6.5 of the Constitution, together with, when appropriate, reports from, or question and answer sessions with, any other body the Committee considers appropriate, accounts and the annual report; c) business motions, including a motion accompanying the proposed strategy of the party; d) constitutional amendments and standing order amendments