



Conference Report

Glasgow 4 – 8 October 2014

This report contains the policy motions, business motions, and constitutional amendments passed by Conference, as amended. Defeated motions have not been included. It also includes questions on reports of party bodies.

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Liberal Democrats



Stronger Economy. Fairer Society.
Opportunity for Everyone.

Policy Motions

F4 Reducing Poverty and Discrimination

Conference believes that:

- A. It is unacceptable that anyone, anywhere in the world, should live in absolute poverty in the twenty-first century.

- B. A world in which there is deep-seated poverty and injustice is a more dangerous place.**
- C. Absolute poverty can and must be eliminated by 2030, through ambitious and concerted international efforts.**
- D. Such ambition is both morally right and in the national interest.**
- E. Principles of transparency and accountability must underpin all international development activities, to enable people to pursue their own paths from poverty to prosperity.**

Conference notes that:

- i) Significant progress has been made towards achieving the Millennium Development Goals since 2000, in particular halving the proportion of people living in absolute poverty globally.**
- ii) Helping to build prosperity abroad also helps to create British jobs and provide markets for British exports.**
- iii) In an increasingly globalised world, challenges such as climate change, pollution and disease affect developed and developing countries alike, requiring a coordinated approach.**
- iv) Policies on issues such as trade, transparency, climate change, agricultural subsidies and arms sales can impact partner countries as much as - or more than - the provision of official development assistance (ODA).**
- v) NGO and private sector partnerships add great value alongside aid; both by helping to develop capacity in low-income and middle-income countries, and by increasing public understanding of and support for international development in the UK.**
- vi) There is potential for wider and deeper international networks across civil society.**
- vii) The impacts of global threats are exacerbated by poverty and inequality.**
- vii) Eliminating absolute poverty requires specific action to address the needs of groups facing social, political or economic discrimination, in order to ensure that no-one is left behind.**
- ix) Extreme discrimination and violence, such as Female Genital Mutilation, need to be addressed not only in the developing world but everywhere, including in the UK.**
- x) According to International Labour Organisation estimates there are 21 million people who are the victims of forced labour across and the world.**

Conference welcomes:

- a) The Coalition Government's achievement in becoming the first G8 country to meet its commitment to provide 0.7% of gross national income in ODA, despite challenging economic circumstances.**
- b) Liberal Democrat Michael Moore's Private Member's Bill to enshrine this commitment in law.**
- c) Government efforts to increase the transparency of financial flows to developing countries, including the activities of the extractive industries as well as aid.**
- d) The efforts of Lynne Featherstone MP and other Liberal Democrats in government to address Female Genital Mutilation, and to increase global recognition of its importance, after it had been overlooked for decades.**

Conference urges Liberal Democrats in government to:

1. Commit to elimination of absolute poverty by 2030, guided by the principle of leaving no-one behind.
2. Provide support to people in developing countries that enables everyone to participate fully in economic, political and social life and have a say in decisions that affect them.
3. Focus on reducing discrimination against the poorest and most disadvantaged members of society; particularly on the grounds of gender, sexual orientation, disability or ethnicity.
4. Develop an International Gender Equality Strategy, including recognition of women's right to education and freedom from enforced marriage.
5. Deliver on our commitment to ending Female Genital Mutilation within a generation.
6. Support an International LGBT Strategy, including a guaranteed right not to be discriminated against.
7. Ensure that issues of environment and sustainability are fully integrated with issues of economic development and equity in the post-2015 Goals.
8. Commit a significant proportion of aid to meeting global challenges such as Climate Change and pollution.
9. Commit to eliminating TB, HIV and malaria - which disproportionately affect poor people - within a generation.
10. Develop a 'whole of Government' approach to international development, ensuring that policies of Ministries other than the Department for International Development support global efforts to reduce absolute poverty.
11. Support the recommendations of the Joint Parliamentary Committee on the Draft Modern Slavery Bill and work to incorporate its recommendations on addressing slavery in the supply chain.
12. Lead international action to ensure that multinational companies pay fair taxes in the developing countries in which they operate, by proposing global tax standards that would eliminate tax evasion practices including abuses of transfer pricing and intra-group lending.
13. Begin work to develop a new civil society partnership scheme, supported by Government, that will encourage new sorts of partnership; such as municipality to municipality, trades union to trades union, and emergency service to emergency service.
14. Encourage and support the Fairtrade movement in promoting 'aid through trade' to ensure that farmers and workers in the developing world receive a fair and stable price for their products, and also to encourage the use of Fairtrade products wherever possible throughout the Parliamentary estate.

Background briefing

This motion updates and develops previous policy on international development as set out in policy paper 97, *Accountability to the Poor* (2010). In particular, it creates new policy on eliminating TB, HIV and malaria, treating tax evasion as a development issue and integrating environmental sustainability with economic development.

The Federal Conference Committee accepted drafting amendments to the motion which:

inserted x) and 11.

and in 12. deleted 'such as' and inserted 'including abuses of', and deleted 'intra-corporation' and inserted 'intra-group'.

Conference voted in support of an amendment which:

inserted 14.

F9 Towards Safer Sex Work

Conference notes that:

- I. 'Sex work' encompasses a broad span of commercial activity that includes phone-line operators, webcam broadcasters, actors in the adult entertainment industry, escorts, and indoor as well as outdoor sex workers.
- II. Prostitution in itself is legal but many of the related activities, such as solicitation and brothel keeping, are criminalised.
- III. The decriminalisation of sex work has been Liberal Democrat policy since the 1994 publication of policy paper 3, *Confronting Prostitution*.
- IV. Sex workers are comprised of people in a variety of economic situations or from marginalised groups, including single mothers, students, men who have sex with men, and transgender people saving so they can access adequate medical care.
- V. Many sex workers engage in the trade of their own volition without economic coercion, often as a way to ensure financial stability and even wealth completely on their own terms.
- VI. Peer-reviewed high quality academic research, along with senior medical practitioners in the delivery of NHS sexual health services, provide strong evidence for decriminalisation.
- VII. States such as New Zealand have moved to a policy of decriminalisation of sex work with success in terms of the safety of sex workers where it has reduced cases of violence against sex workers.
- VIII. Sex workers in New Zealand are allowed to work together and organise themselves in the way they see fit, can protect their safety much better, have more trust and a better relationship with the police which is more conducive to detecting and punishing abuses.
- IX. In England, the 'Merseyside Model' which treats violence against sex workers as a hate crime, has been implemented in several major cities, most notably Liverpool.
- X. Amnesty International, from early 2014, engaged in a global consultation on sex work with a draft policy recommending decriminalisation, and at Amnesty's UK annual general meeting, a motion in support of decriminalisation of sex work was 'comfortably' carried.

Conference welcomes the work of Liberal Democrats, in particular:

1. The 2011 Home Office Review of Effective Practice in Responding to Prostitution, signed by Lynne Featherstone MP as an Equalities Minister, which argued for:
 - a) Safety to be made an overriding priority.
 - b) Translation services, ESL courses, and other language support for migrant sex workers.
 - c) Violence against sex workers to be treated as a hate crime.
 - d) A focus of resources against the grooming of young women in care homes.

2. The announcement in 2011 by Lynne Featherstone MP of a £100,000 grant towards piloting an 'Ugly Mugs' scheme aimed at protecting sex workers, in conjunction with the UK Network of Sex Projects.
3. Prior to being a governing party, the opposition by Liberal Democrat MPs to provisions in the Policing and Crime Act 2009 aimed towards criminalising some aspects of sex work and working conditions brought forward by a majority Labour government.

Conference expresses concern that:

- i) Laws regarding solicitation and loitering force sex workers into isolated areas where they are at more danger of sexual and physical violence.
- ii) Laws prohibiting brothel-keeping prevent sex workers from working out of the same premises to ensure their own safety.
- iii) Raids of saunas in Edinburgh and London were orchestrated with publicity in mind - including inviting the press to the raids in Soho in December 2013 - rather than for the welfare and privacy of the women in sex work.
- iv) Studies promoting the criminalisation of clients or 'demand' often conflate legal migrants of an ethnic minority background with trafficked women in a way that is tantamount to racism.
- v) Approaches which criminalise the purchase of sexual services but not, overtly, the workers themselves, criminalise otherwise law abiding people and divert criminal justice resources away from serious harms in society, including young people in care homes at risk of grooming, victims of trafficking, and migrant workers in domestic - and sometimes sexual - servitude.
- vi) The enforcement of the above approach in the 'Nordic' approach in Scandinavian countries had no appreciable effect in preventing violence against women or poverty, and has reduced negotiating power that street workers previously had.
- vii) Just as the criminalisation of homosexuality and abortion leads to unsafe practices regarding LGBT and women's healthcare respectively, criminalisation of sex work leads to unsafe sexual health practices.
- viii) Immigration status, and not the welfare of women suspected of being trafficked, is currently a priority within police forces.
- ix) Sex workers invariably fear state violence and police brutality more than they fear violence from people masquerading as clients, or from members of the public.

Conference believes that:

- A. Laws against rape and sexual violence need to be strongly enforced, especially against people suspected of trafficking others.
- B. There should be no bar towards consensual sexual activities between any number of adults.
- C. Every person has a right to bodily autonomy, and it is not for the State to decide what a they can or cannot do with their body, including engage in sex work if they so choose.
- D. The abolition of sex work is not practically feasible without fully eradicating circumstances related to economic hardship, and cannot be sought through any prohibition on consensual sex work.
- E. Decriminalisation of sex work would help engender better working conditions and sexual health practices among workers.

- F. Decriminalisation would also help foster a positive culture where the importance of informed and enthusiastic consent is paramount.
- G. It is our responsibility as liberals to ensure that the most disadvantaged people in society are fought for just as hard as the least, and it is key that we should sometimes just amplify their voices instead of offering our own.

Conference calls for:

1. Continued support the principles in policy paper 3 and the establishment of a Working Group to prepare an updated version of the policy paper that deals with the issue of sex work in the 21st Century.
2. In the interim, opposition to any steps to implement the Nordic model and reaffirmation of our support for decriminalisation of sex work, protections for survivors of violence against women, and the promotion of safer sexual health practices and better sex and relationship ethics, including in all tiers of the education system.
3. The 'Merseyside model', in which crimes against sex workers are treated as hate crimes, to be rolled out nationwide.
4. The promotion of solutions to the problem of international trafficking and forced prostitution that do not endanger the lives of sex workers.
5. Work to be taken in conjunction with sex worker organisations to ensure the safety of workers, including reintroducing the Ugly Mugs scheme on a more permanent basis.
6. For our commitment for strong social and community safety nets to be reaffirmed, so that no person should be pressured to enter or be afraid to exit sex work at any time.

Applicability: England and Wales, except educational aspects of 'Conference calls for' 2 (lines 104-108) which are England only.

Background briefing

This motion updates and develops previous policy as set out in policy paper 3, *Confronting Prostitution (1994)*. In particular it develops policy on the 'Merseyside model' in which crimes against sex workers are treated as hate crimes and rejects the 'Nordic model' of decriminalising sex workers but criminalising clients.

Conference voted to retain v) and ix), and, in 2., the words 'opposition to any steps to implement the Nordic model and'.

Conference voted to reject an amendment which would have:

in B. after 'adults' inserted 'in private'

and replaced C. with:

'Every adult has the right to engage in sex work if they so choose, and every adult has the right to protection from being sexually exploited.'

F10 First Aid in Schools

Conference notes that:

- i) Nearly 60% of adults do not feel confident enough to try to save a life, according to ICM Research.
- ii) Nearly 9 out of 10 11-16 year olds have been confronted with a medical emergency, according to the British Red Cross.
- iii) In Norway and Seattle, where emergency life-saving skills are taught as part of the school curriculum, those who suffer a cardiac arrest away from a hospital have a 52% chance of survival, compared to 18% in the UK.

Conference believes that:

- a) First aid and life-saving skills are valuable both to individuals and to society.
- b) First aid and life-saving skills training should provide all pupils with the opportunity of hands on and kinaesthetic learning, in addition to theoretical knowledge.
- c) First aid and life-saving skills training can help to increase pupil engagement and attainment across the curriculum.
- d) The addition of an Automatic External Defibrillator (AED) to schools could be of benefit in case of cardiac arrest and that Local Authorities should work with schools to support them in providing AEDs if they deem it beneficial.

Conference calls for:

1. The Department for Education to include first aid and emergency life-saving skills in the national curriculum in primary and secondary schools through PSHE provision.
2. The Government to support schools in selecting first aid and emergency life-saving skills training providers and teaching resources according to their own curriculum.

Applicability: England only.

Background briefing

This motion creates new policy.

The Federal Conference Committee accepted a drafting amendment which:

in 1. deleted 'emergency life-skills' and inserted 'and emergency life-saving skills'.

F11 Reforming the Welfare System

Conference believes that the test of a civilised society is the way in which it cares for those unable to care for themselves and how it helps those in need to fulfil their potential; the guiding principle of the UK welfare system must be to ensure that none are left unable to meet their basic needs for survival and participation in society.

Conference notes that:

- A. The welfare system had been allowed to become overly complex and unruly and that whilst Universal Credit is the biggest and most positive development in the welfare system for years, it has suffered serious implementation problems.**
- B. Benefit sanctions are hitting those in most need of support, with the 14 day rule leaving people penniless and having to visit food banks.**
- C. There is a growing backlog of assessments for Employment Support Allowance claims and migrations from previous disability benefits, alongside long-standing concerns identified in previous conference motions over the quality of such assessments, notwithstanding the annual reviews which have called for improvements.**
- D. Some system of discretionary hardship payments is required to assist those most in crisis to prevent them from falling into abject poverty.**
- E. The rapidly expanding benefits bill must be tackled through alternative approaches to reducing poverty such as increased employment, living wage incomes and affordable housing.**
- F. There are 6,000 destitute refugees and asylum seekers in the UK supported by British Red Cross each year who are entitled to no benefits or housing but are not allowed to work, and the Liberal Democrats' clearly stated in policy paper 116, Making Migration Work for Britain (March 2014), that destitution for those who came to the UK to seek sanctuary is unacceptable.**
- G. Cuts to central and local government funding have impacted directly on services that provide advice and support to the public on issues surrounding social welfare laws, coming at a time when there has been an increase in demand for these services due to the financial downturn, austerity and government welfare reforms.**
- H. Complaints against Welfare to Work schemes involving unpaid work, such as unsuitable placements, the undermining of the minimum wage and how these controversies are discouraging third party organisations from participating and providing placements.**

Conference therefore calls for:

- 1. A review of Universal Credit implementation to address poor administration, information management and data quality issues as well cliff edges within Universal Credit that may disincentivise increased working hours, or leave insufficient childcare or other basic needs support.**
- 2. Reform of the Hardship Fund to provide immediate loans to people who have benefit sanctions, which will be repaid, and administered through local government.**
- 3. A different approach towards conditions and sanctions so that they are only used as a last resort in a small number of cases where all other approaches to engagement have failed; as a starting point the Department of Work and Pensions should immediately implement the recommendations of the Oakley Review.**
- 4. Introduction of a single assessment process across different disability benefits, based on real world tests of capability and functionality, with better allocation into different groups and greater onus and incentives on assessment contractors to collect relevant evidence from health professionals working with those claimants, so that assessment decisions can be right first time and avoid reconsideration and appeal costs.**
- 5. Liberal Democrats in Government to commit to ensuring that no one residing in the UK suffers destitution, to use their influence to change the law to require asylum seekers to seek work after 6 months and to make Section 95 support available to**

those who cannot work, and to support charities working in the field of ending destitution in the UK.

6. Improvements to the Work Programme; the programme should:
 - a) Have a stronger role for local authority commissioning to suit local needs and requirements allowing charities to deliver to the best of their abilities at a local level whilst preventing silos of subcontracting.
 - b) Introduce a more specialist support pathway for ESA claimants with more complex needs tailored services for enhanced support to assist those with long term conditions and disabilities, supported by incentives for business to provide employment on flexible and accessible basis.
7. All changes in DWP (or any relevant successor department) policies to be reviewed annually for five years after implementation.
8. Implementation of the recommendations of the Low Commission, including publication of a National Strategy for Advice and Legal Support, and creation of a National Advice and Legal Support Fund which would be used for funding national and local advice services as well as legal support work; the Department for Work and Pensions should be required to contribute towards this fund, in recognition of the advice needs it is creating through its welfare reforms and faulty assessments.
9. A reformed approach to Welfare to Work schemes whereby:
 - a) Benefit claimants are given encouragement and support to arrange their own work experience placements, to help them find the right placement in their area of interest to further their dreams and aspirations.
 - b) A Fairness Principle is implemented for mandatory schemes, so claimants made to work for their benefits receive the equivalent of minimum wage for their work.

Applicability: Federal.

Background briefing

This motion updates and develops policy in the areas of social security and the Work Programme. In particular it develops policy on the use of sanctions in the welfare system, improving assessment processes and creating a more flexible and tailored approach to helping people into work through the Work Programme. Previous policy on welfare assessments is set out in policy motions Equal Citizenship (2012) and Employment and Support Allowances and Work Capability Assessments (2011). Previous policy in the Work Programme is set out in policy paper 103, Giving Young People a Future (2012).

The Federal Conference Committee accepted drafting amendments which:

inserted F, 5, and 7.

Conference accepted amendments which inserted:

G, H, 8, and 9.

F13 Doing What Works to Cut Crime (Crime and Criminal

Justice Policy Paper)

Conference welcomes the fall in crime that has occurred under the Coalition Government and the work done by Liberal Democrats to achieve it.

Conference rejects the approach of the Conservative and Labour Parties, which has too often ignored evidence of what works, needlessly compromised our civil liberties and freedoms, and wasted money.

Conference believes that:

- i) Crime policy must be based on the evidence of what works.**
- ii) More preventative work is required, particularly through joined-up working with other public services.**
- iii) Too many victims of crime still have a negative experience in the system.**
- iv) Too many criminals are not required to confront their behaviour.**
- v) More action is required to tackle violence against women and girls.**
- vi) Too few prisoners receive effective pre-release support and re-offending rates remain unacceptably high.**
- vii) A new preventative, health-based approach is required to tackle drug and alcohol misuse.**
- viii) Stop and Search remains a source of deep mistrust between the police and the public, and requires reform.**

Conference therefore endorses policy paper 118, Doing What Works to Cut Crime, particularly its proposals:

- 1. To prevent crime by:**
 - a) Promoting community restorative justice to target those at risk of offending.**
 - b) 'Designing it out' of products and new developments through changes to Building Regulations, making the police statutory planning consultees and raising awareness about anti-theft measures in electronic devices.**
 - c) Expanding the use of peer group influence on those at risk of offending.**
 - d) Utilising the experience, knowledge and innovation of the third sector and creating a more joined-up, innovative approach towards service delivery.**
 - e) Working closely with our European partners and the wider world to prevent serious and organised crime.**
- 2. To adopt a new evidence-based approach towards drug and alcohol-related crime that recognises that its causes are primarily health issues by:**
 - a) Passing the lead in those areas to the Department of Health, keeping law enforcement in the Home Office.**
 - b) Making decisions on drug classifications from the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs binding.**

- c) Subject to implementation work, adopting a model whereby those arrested with drugs for personal use would be diverted to treatment for problematic users and education or Fixed Penalty Notices for those who are not.
- d) Subject to a review finding that there is good evidence of effectiveness (in relation to public health and reduced criminal activity) from international contexts, we would invite that review to consider potential frameworks for a strictly regulated cannabis market with tight controls on quality and strength to curb organised crime.
- e) Imposing severe penalties on those who manufacture, import and/or deal in illegal drugs - the dealing of illegal drugs underpins organised crime and is rightly a serious offence.

3. To improve support for victims of crime by:

- a) Creating a national helpline for the victims of sexual offences.
- b) Implementing a single point of contact for victims who want to complain.
- c) Ensuring that all hate crimes are aggravated offences and more harshly sentenced.
- d) Promoting Restorative Justice which places the victim at the heart of rehabilitation.
- e) Working with the Department for Education to ensure that sexual consent, Female Genital Mutilation, violence against women and girls, and domestic violence properly feature on the curriculum.
- f) Ensuring those suffering from domestic violence, who have retracted their evidence against their partner because of fear and intimidation, are not prosecuted for making false allegations.

4. For more effective policing in which the community can have confidence, including:

- a) Building an assessment of harm into the crime figures.
- b) The wider use of crime maps and GPS data so that resources can more effectively be deployed.
- c) Widening the use of body-worn cameras to make sure that Stop and Search is conducted properly and to secure better evidence.
- d) Tightening up Stop and Search with new Codes of Practice and, for Section 60 areas, a requirement for judicial authorisation.
- e) A presumption in favour of asset and back office sharing between forces and mergers where the local community want it; subject always to retaining a link between the police and local communities.
- f) Replacing Police and Crime Commissioners with democratic Police Boards.
- g) Expanding the current pilots of mental health related liaison and diversion and street triage models.
- h) Tackling corruption and re-building trust through mandatory CPD for all police officers; strengthening the IPCC and improving local complaints procedures; ensuring corruption investigations are independent; and reporting progress in these matters annually to Parliament.
- i) Safeguarding civil liberties by limiting kettling and the use of undercover officers.

5. To focus the Criminal Justice System on what works by:

- a) Gathering outcomes data court by court and creating a single body to spread best practice throughout the system.

- b) Improving the diversity of the Magistracy.
- c) Safeguarding jury trials in the Crown Court and streamlining court procedure.
- d) Injecting alternative sources of funding for criminal legal aid through the use of restrained assets and company directors insurance so as to guarantee a diverse market of providers.

6. To end the cycle of reoffending by:

- a) Embedding 'through the gate' support for those approaching release and ensuring that the day of release is one after which support services are available so that a routine can be established.
- b) Ending the imprisonment of women who do not need to be incarcerated through a Women's Justice Board along the lines of the successful Youth Justice Board and by taking the interests of children into account when sentencing.
- c) Piloting intermittent custody models including weekend or evening custody, curfews and GPS tagging to limit the liberty of offenders whilst allowing them to carry on working.
- d) Devolving the custody budget for young offenders to local authorities.
- e) Seeking to reduce the number of young people from BAME backgrounds in custody.

7. To tackle cybercrime by:

- a) Directing police resources towards preventative and awareness-raising work and making it easier to report it.
- b) Aligning the basis of criminal liability for comments made on social media, on the telephone and between people physically present.
- c) Making 'revenge porn' a criminal offence.
- d) Increasing penalties for Data Protection Act breaches while establishing effective public interest defences in this act and others (including the Computer Misuse Act 1990, RIPA and the Bribery Act 2000) to protect responsible journalism; and ensuring greater protection for legally privileged and journalistic material from requests for telephone and other records.
- e) Ensuring that there is a named person in every school to help the victims of cyber-bullying.

Applicability: England and Wales, except 1 e) (lines 32-33), 2 b)-e) (lines 39-53), and 7 d) (line 117) which are Federal, and 1 b) (lines 25-28), 2 a) (lines 37-38), 3 e) (lines 62-64) and 7 e) (lines 118-119) which are England only.

Background briefing

This motion and the accompanying policy paper substantially update and develop policy in the fields of crime and criminal justice. In particular they develop new policies on tackling the problems caused by drug abuse, increasing the accountability of the police, support for victims, rehabilitation of offenders and tackling the new threats of cyber crime. Previous policy on the penal system and rehabilitation of offenders is set out in policy motion Rehabilitation Revolution (2012), previous policy on drugs is set out in policy motion Protecting Individuals and Communities from Drug Harms (2011) and previous policy on policing and police structures is set out in policy motion Cutting Crime by Catching Criminals (2008).

The Federal Conference Committee accepted drafting amendments which:

replaced 3. e) which read:

'Working with the Department for Education to ensure that Female Genital Mutilation, domestic violence and other violence against women and girls properly features on the curriculum.'

in 4. h) after 'Tackling corruption' inserted:

'and re-building trust through mandatory CPD for all police officers; strengthening the IPCC and improving local complaints procedures; ensuring corruption investigations are independent; and reporting progress in these matters annually to Parliament'.

replaced 6. a) which read:

'Embedding 'through the gate' support for those approaching release.'

Conference accepted an amendment which in 7. d) after 'breaches' inserted:

'while establishing effective public interest defences in this act and others (including the Computer Misuse Act 1990, RIPA and the Bribery Act 2000) to protect responsible journalism; and ensuring greater protection for legally privileged and journalistic material from requests for telephone and other records'.

F16 Protecting Public Services and Making them Work for You (Public Services Policy Paper)

Conference believes that good quality, accessible public services play a vital role in helping us all to live fulfilling lives and supporting the most vulnerable, wherever we live.

Conference affirms Liberal Democrats' commitment to protecting public services, improving them, and ensuring they work more effectively for every user.

Conference believes that public services:

- a) Should always aim to be high-quality, accessible, equally accessible to all, joined-up, empowering for their users, and locally accountable and transparent.
- b) Cover an enormously diverse range of services, and that no one fixed model can suit them all.
- c) Have their greatest asset in the staff who in difficult circumstances deliver good quality services to the public day in, day out, and that they work best when they are freed up to focus on providing a good service to their users.
- d) Are most effective when they work with users as partners in their delivery, rather than simply as passive recipients.

- e) **Should be pro-active in seeking to prevent problems, as well as tackling them when they arise.**

Conference therefore endorses policy paper 119, Protecting Public Services and Making Them Work for You, as a statement of Liberal Democrat policy on public services generally and especially schools, health and transport, and particularly welcomes its proposals to:

1. **Realise the huge potential for services to work together more effectively for the benefit of users, not distracted by formal structural changes, through:**
 - a) **Enabling public authorities responsible for different public services in a local area, led by a democratically-accountable tier, to come together to form a local Better Outcomes Board, supported by financial incentives from central government, to share budgets and explore ways of working together to better meet the combined needs of local people.**
 - b) **Employing modern uses of information which have significant power to create innovative and improved services, but with the user controlling their own data and always having the opportunity to opt out of data-sharing; access to personal data must be strictly controlled; and where data is used for research purposes, it must be anonymized.**
 - c) **Applying Freedom of Information obligations to private providers of public services as well as to the public sector, and making contractual arrangements more transparent, including a presumption in favour of 'open book accounting' in contracts.**
 - d) **Investing in leadership, which is crucial to developing and improving public services, and helping services and users to benefit from a range of steps to promote movement over careers across different parts of public services, including combined cross-service leadership development.**
 - e) **Recognising that inspection regimes play an important part in ensuring accountability, but cannot themselves ensure good quality services, and must not be excessively burdensome.**

2. **Make services flexible enough to meet the specific needs of their individual users, through:**
 - a) **Giving individual users a formal right to request a specific flexibility in the service they receive, backed by mediation.**
 - b) **Where a sizeable proportion of users or the public for a private or other provider of a public service believe that the service is inadequate, providing for a 'community trigger for change', through which they could require the responsible authority to conduct a full review of who provides the service, and how.**
 - c) **All providers of public services, whether public, private or voluntary:**
 - i) **Being genuinely accountable to their users and the wider public.**
 - ii) **Meeting common standards in employment standards, data-sharing and equity of government funding.**
 - iii) **Respecting the values of public services including sharing best practice so that the general public can benefit.**
 - iv) **Being transparent and operating in good faith.**
 - v) **Not using abusive tax avoidance schemes.**

And that where they meet this test, they should achieve the status of 'Accredited Public Service'.

- d) Using measures or targets with extreme caution, in a way that is very limited and focussed on helping the public understand whether a good service is being delivered, rather than burdensome, excessively numerous and focussed on internal processes.
3. Encourage public services to become increasingly pro-active in helping improve lives, for example in preventing illness, as well as of course meeting existing current needs, by:
 - a) Fully involving staff in designing services, and having a strategy for involving users as partners in delivery of services.
 - b) Supporting users in mutual support arrangements, including through allowing them to share 'personal budgets'.
 4. Apply these approaches to achieve improvements in schools, especially:
 - a) Recognizing the crucial importance of good quality teaching to educational attainment, by creating an Investing in Teaching package, including:
 - i) Supporting the creation of a Royal College of Teachers.
 - ii) Creating a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) entitlement for all teachers of 50 hours per year, as part of a robust CPD framework.
 - iii) Spreading established good models for leadership development and school-to-school improvement.
 - b) Ensuring every child is taught by a qualified teacher.
 - c) Continuing to ensure that there is no return to a split between academic and vocational qualifications at age 16.
 - d) Continuing the pupil premium which successfully targets £2.5 billion a year on the most disadvantaged children, and extending the early years premium.
 - e) Continuing to slim down the national curriculum, putting it under the responsibility of an independent Educational Standards Authority (ESA) and requiring all state-funded schools to teach the same core curriculum, a slimmed-down national curriculum, which should include sex and relationship education, religious education but not religious instruction, and balanced and non-partisan political education, as part of Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE).
 - f) Clarifying responsibility for improving poorly performing schools, including academies and free schools, with schools themselves, any academy chains or dioceses they are part of, and their local authorities, all responsible for improvement, and all inspected for this work by Ofsted.
 - g) Repealing the rule that all new schools must be free schools or academies.
 - h) Being clear that responsibility for planning schools places locally, and decisions about any new schools required and their organizational status, must lie with the democratically-accountable local authority.
 - i) Abolishing the new regional tier for oversight of schools, and ensuring local Headteacher Boards of successful local heads, accountable to their peers, provide assistance to schools in need.

- j) **Allowing local people, when they believe a school is consistently inadequate, to require the local authority to carry out a review of the school's management.**
 - k) **Schools continuing to set their admissions policy, and to ensure that every child has a fair chance and be treated equally, the local authority being responsible for admissions to all publicly-funded schools in their area.**
5. **Apply these approaches to improve the NHS, which must remain free at the point of delivery, by:**
- a) **Committing to £1bn further real terms investment in the NHS each year until our fiscal mandate is met in 2017/18, followed by sustained real term increases in funding once the deficit has been eradicated and debt is falling, paid for through an increase in dividend tax on additional rate taxpayers, a further tightening of the cap on pension tax relief and by scrapping the 'shares for rights' scheme introduced by the Conservatives.**
 - b) **Making the aspiration of 'parity of esteem' between mental and physical health a reality, through spreading good practice access standards for mental health services, supporting greater integration between mental and physical health, and moving towards equality of funding to reflect the respective health need.**
 - c) **Delivering better care by continuing to expand approaches to integrated care, building on the Pioneers scheme.**
 - d) **Reforming 'tariffs', to promote better care, particularly for people with long term conditions.**
 - e) **Ensuring easier access to GPs, through:**
 - i) **Expanding evening and weekend opening.**
 - ii) **More use of communication by modern technology when a face to face appointment is not necessary.**
 - iii) **Greater use of 'federations' of GP practices to provide better access to care, closer to home, including out of hours.**
 - iv) **Making full use of the potential of pharmacists.**
 - v) **Allowing you, if you wish to, to register with a GP near your work, instead of near your home.**
 - f) **Ending the role of the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) in health, making the rules clear that the needs of patients will always come ahead of competition, and that services need not be put out to tender if local people are happy with them.**
 - g) **While recognizing the value of increasing choice and enabling innovation in services, ensuring that duties on commissioners of health care give a higher priority to reducing inequality, and integration of services, than to promoting competition.**
 - h) **Permitting NHS commissioners and providers in a local area to form a single integrated health organisation, responsible for managing the provision and integration of NHS services in that area, subject to public consultation, endorsement by local Health and Wellbeing Board(s), built-in arrangements for rigorous evaluation of effectiveness, and approval by Monitor and the Department of Health.**
 - i) **Continuing to develop Health and Wellbeing Boards, to comprise more elected councillors on a politically proportional basis and from all relevant tiers, and increasingly take on more responsibilities, including if they wish to for**

commissioning local GP services, and to be able to amend the commissioning plan of local commissioners.

- j) Consulting on a legal duty to pool the whole health and social care budget in each local area; local commissioners should agree a joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy covering the expenditure of the full budget, although the details of how services would be commissioned would remain a matter for local areas.
- k) Encouraging the development of joined up health providers which cover hospital and community services, including GPs, learning from international best practice examples such as Accountable Care Organisations.
- l) Repealing any parts of the NHS Health and Social Care Act 2012 dealing with competition were they shown to make NHS services vulnerable to increased privatisation through international agreements on free markets in goods and services.

6. Apply these approaches to achieve improvements in sustainable local public transport, which has a crucial role to play, especially in rural areas, in maintaining communities where people want to live and work, and in ensuring fair access to other public services and other opportunities, through:

- a) Creating minimum standards for frequency and access for local public transport.
- b) Giving public authorities greater influence over transport in their area, especially by supporting them to create 'Quality Contracts' which could help to achieve good services to meet the needs of local people.
- c) Supporting small-scale voluntary or other organisations to be able to provide flexible, local transport services.
- d) Ensuring all new significant infrastructure or vehicles meet standards for disability access, including audiovisual information.
- e) Allowing public bodies to bid for rail franchises.
- f) Getting refunds for delays or difficulties paid automatically for longer rail journeys, and providing better services and compensation when 'rail replacement' arrangements are required.
- g) Extending 'smart ticketing', to give greater convenience for passengers, automatic lowest fares, and greater linkages across transport modes and with other public services.
- h) Ensuring providers make realtime information on their services available electronically, as Transport for London does.
- i) Giving a discount of two-thirds of the cost of buses to 16-21 year olds.

Applicability: England only, except 1 b) (lines 32-37), 1 d) and e) (lines 42-49), 2 (lines 50-72) and 3 a) (lines 76-77) which are Federal, and 3 b) (lines 78-79), 6 a) (lines 160-161) and 6 e) (line 170) which are England and Wales.

Background briefing

This motion and the accompanying policy paper substantially develop and update policies on the public services, with a particular focus on health, schools and transport. Cross-cutting policies include a right to request flexibility in the delivery of public services, a community trigger for change, and the development of Better Outcome Boards to promote integration between different services. In health, new policies include delivering parity of esteem between mental and physical health, development of Health and Wellbeing Boards with more elected councillors, and the ending of the role of the

Competition and Markets Authority in the NHS. In education, new policies include proposals to improve professional development of teachers including the creation of a Royal College of Teachers, the introduction of an Education Standards Authority to take responsibility for the curriculum and a stronger role for local authorities in planning school places and making decisions over new schools. In the field of transport new proposals include a two-thirds discount on buses for 16–21 year olds, allowing public sector bids for rail franchises and giving better compensation for poor service on the railways.

Previous policies on health are set out in conference motions *Protecting Our NHS (2012)* and *Updating the NHS – Personal and Local (2011)* and in the 2010 general election manifesto, *Change That Works For You*. The last comprehensive statement of health policy is in policy paper 84, *Empowerment, Fairness and Quality in Health Care (2008)*.

Previous policies on schools are set out in policy motions *Every Child Taught by an Excellent Teacher (2013)*, *Getting the Most out of Schools (2012)* and *Free Schools and Academies (2010)* and in the 2010 general election manifesto, *Change That Works For You*. The last comprehensive statement of schools policy is in policy paper 89, *Equity and Excellence (2009)*.

Previous policies on transport are set out in conference motion *Rail Franchises (2009)* and policy paper 85, *Fast Track Britain (2008)* and in the 2010 general election manifesto, *Change That Works For You*.

The Federal Conference Committee accepted the following drafting amendments which:

in 2. c) iii) after 'services' inserted:

'including sharing best practice so that the general public can benefit'

inserted 2. c) v)

in 4. e) after 'curriculum' inserted:

'which should include sex and relationship education, religious education but not religious instruction, and balanced and non-partisan political education, as part of Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE).'

inserted 5. j) and 5. k).

Conference accepted amendments which inserted 5. a), 5. h), 5. l).

Conference rejected an amendment which after 6. i) would have inserted:

j) Extend the statutory obligation for free school transport to ensure that young people are able to access free state education to age 18.

F18 Tackling Child Abuse

Conference notes that:

- i) All forms of child abuse are abhorrent, and can cause lasting physical, emotional and psychological damage to victims and their families; most perpetrators of child abuse are a close family member or friend of the child, contrary to public perception that child abuse is committed by a stranger.**
- ii) Past cases, where adults in a position of trust in care homes, hospitals, schools, clubs or societies where individuals have repeatedly taken advantage of large numbers of children over a period of years, have highlighted a need to protect children further from the risk of child abuse.**
- iii) Inquiries into various child abuse and exploitation cases have repeatedly found some professionals failing to report child protection concerns (despite being aware of safeguarding issues), which have resulted in further abuse and more children being abused.**
- iv) Peter Wanless, Chief Executive of the NSPCC, who is heading the Government's review of historical child abuse allegations proposed in July that Government should consider stronger corporate duties on adults to protect children living away from home, in institutions like care homes or boarding schools, known as mandatory reporting.**
- v) The Alexis Jay report into the sexual exploitation of children revealed a systematic failure of the authorities to respond to reports of child abuse, that reports were suppressed and that victims were often regarded as willing participants in their own abuse or as criminals.**

Conference believes that:

- a) Peter Wanless's proposals do not go far enough, and millions of children at non-boarding schools, sports clubs and other leisure clubs would not be covered by them.**
- b) Legislation needs to empower and protect any whistleblower who becomes aware of a child at risk of abuse.**
- c) Certain specific exclusions are necessary for confidential helplines such as ChildLine, where children calling in believe that everything they disclose is entirely confidential.**
- d) That the operation of criminal gangs targeting vulnerable children for abuse is unlikely to be limited to a few isolated areas, and that experiences in Rotherham, Rochdale, Oxford and elsewhere should serve as a wake-up call to authorities everywhere.**

Conference calls for Liberal Democrat parliamentarians to press for:

- 1. A legal duty on all staff working in regulated activity to report to the local authority and police known abuse or reasonable suspicion of abuse.**
- 2. All staff working in contact with children who have to complete CRB forms to have training in recognising the early signs of child abuse, and the routes to reporting.**
- 3. Government to sponsor a strong public campaign to make children confident with reporting incidents that they feel uncomfortable about.**
- 4. Legislation to protect whistleblowers who come in to contact with children, to empower them to report incidents without fear of the impact on their own position.**
- 5. Robust reforms of procedures and culture in council and police services, so that victims and their families receive the service that they should be entitled to expect, and perpetrators are brought to justice.**

6. The widening and strengthening of the role of the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) to be able to intervene when a child or young person at risk has been ignored by a statutory service such as the Police or Social Services.
7. Politicians, council officers and police responsible for failures in Rotherham and elsewhere to be held to account.
8. Surety that policies on racial awareness are never interpreted as conflicting with the duty to investigate and prosecute crimes irrespective of the racial identity of the perpetrators.

Applicability: England only.

Background briefing

This motion creates new policy.

The Federal Conference Committee accepted drafting amendments which:

in 1. after 'local authority' inserted 'police'.

and inserted v), d), 5, 7, and 8.

Conference accepted an amendment which inserted 6.

F19 Adapting to Climate Change in the UK

Conference notes:

- a) The fifth assessment report of the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, which described the impacts of global warming as "severe, pervasive and irreversible".
- b) That the impacts of accelerating climate change in the UK include an increase in extreme weather events such as severe winters, heatwaves, flooding from rivers and the sea, and storms and gales, with increased pressure on infrastructure, water supplies and ecosystems.
- c) That the 2013-14 winter in the UK saw record heavy rainfall and frequent strong storms - both at least partly caused by climate change - which led to widespread flooding (exacerbated by recent patterns of building and farming) and accompanying disruption to individuals, buildings and infrastructure.
- d) That the independent Committee on Climate Change concluded in July 2014 that at current rates of investment in flood defences, flood risks in England will increase, that the risk of overheating in homes, hospitals and care homes is being ignored and that intensive farming is still being supported in areas where the ground needs natural vegetation to soak up rainfall.

Conference believes that while action to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases, both in the UK and globally, must remain the government's top priority, urgent attention must

also be paid to adapting to the current and future impacts of climate change.

Conference therefore calls for government to:

1. Ensure flood defence spending is kept in line with that needed to protect against climate change impacts; introduce high standards for flood resilience for buildings and infrastructure in flood risk areas and enforce these for new build and major renovations.
2. Implement programmes to help farmers and other land users adapt to climate change impact, including protecting soil and forest carbon sinks, encouraging planting in uplands, and restoring flood plains, with adequate compensation for landowners to put into place 'soft' prevention measures at source rather than relying on 'hard' flood defences downstream.
3. Introduce long-term planning for droughts and floods, building natural resilience to extreme weather, rather than waiting to clean up the damage.
4. Update construction and planning standards to future-proof housing and commercial buildings against higher summer temperatures caused by climate change, protecting people from heat-related deaths and reducing the need for air conditioning; this should include protecting urban trees and green spaces, to mitigate the 'heat island' effect.
5. Encourage local authorities to report annually to their residents on actions taken to protect them from the impacts of climate change, including flood risk management plans.
6. Extend the mandatory greenhouse gas emission reporting rules for large companies to include actions taken on adaptation.
7. Prepare a national resilience plan to help the UK economy, national infrastructure and natural resources adapt to the likely impacts of a 3-4 degree global average temperature rise, building on the work done through the current national adaptation programme; and increase government resources devoted to the research and implementation of climate adaptation strategies.

Applicability: 6 and 7 (lines 46-53) are Federal; the remainder are England only.

Background briefing

This motion updates and develops policy on adaptation to climate change. In particular it makes new policy on flood defences, long-term planning for extreme weather events and the creation of a National Resilience Plan.

Previous policies on adaptation to climate change are set out in the 2010 general election manifesto, *Change That Works for You*, and policy paper 82, *Towards a Zero-Carbon Britain (2007)*. Previous policies on flooding are set out in policy motion *Managing the Impact and Risk of Flooding (2007)*.

F21 Building the Affordable Homes We Need

Conference welcomes the measures in policy paper 104, Decent Homes For All (2012), and conference motion Reform of the Planning System (March 2014) to deliver up to 300,000 new homes a year, to give renters a new deal, increase the resilience of the house-building industry, give local authorities and social housing providers more powers to build, secure land for development at lower prices and remove underlying barriers to restoring house price stability.

Conference notes with concern:

- i) The failure of the private sector, and of previous administrations, to deliver the homes that Britain needs.
- ii) The far reaching consequences of a shortage of decent housing on economic growth, labour market mobility, education, social mobility, health and the shape of economic growth in the UK.
- iii) The barriers to sustainable housing delivery including: an opaque land market, lack of both public and private finance, the capacity and competitiveness of the house building industry, integration of infrastructure provision, historical failures in design and planning, and inconsistent political will.

Conference celebrates the Liberal Democrat commitment to:

- a) Freeing local authorities to build for the first time in a generation, bringing 102,000 empty homes back into use since 2010 and allowing councils to charge full Council Tax on second homes and empty homes.
- b) Delivering long term strategic investment in infrastructure, to support economic growth outside of London.
- c) Empowering local authorities to create new garden cities, towns, villages and neighbourhoods where there is local demand.

Conference therefore calls for:

1. Government investment to support a new generation of quality homes which are affordable even for those on low and middle incomes, including shared ownership, rent-to-buy and other intermediate tenures, where every monthly payment goes towards owning the house.
2. Creation of a new Housing Investment Bank to simplify the allocation of public funds, create the scale needed to draw in private investment and improve access to finance for social housing providers through traditional capital grant, soft loans and equity investment, bond issues and government guarantees; as part of this, including a 'challenge fund' to promote innovative solutions to the housing crisis, imbed long termism and ensure best value for the tax payer.
3. Local authorities being allowed to develop homes of a broad mix of tenures through local housing companies, outside of the Housing Revenue Account, retaining a local authority link.
4. Social landlords to be given more control over their businesses, to develop more genuinely affordable homes and enable more efficient use of their resources, by allowing greater rent flexibilities, lifting restrictions on how they value their stock and

- allowing them to take account of the whole cost of occupancy relating to heating costs to encourage landlords to invest to reduce heating costs and cut fuel poverty.
5. Urgent amendment of the New Towns Act to transfer its powers to Local Authorities to acquire land at above existing use value for the creation of new garden villages, neighbourhoods, towns and cities where appropriate to meet identified housing need, using the land uplift to deliver the highest quality, the infrastructure, and build thriving mixed communities at affordable prices whilst protecting existing communities from unnecessary, poorly-serviced and unpopular sequential development.
 6. To increase capacity for house building to meet the 300,000 homes a year target, encourage the development of the offsite construction industry, continue and strengthen support for small and medium size builders, new entrants and self-build, and unlock Housing Association capacity by freeing up opportunities to access land through the new garden communities programme.
 7. Planning authorities to be given the power to designate New Home Zones on strategic sites to generate low cost development and growth.
 8. A large-scale apprenticeships and training programme to build skills capacity over a long period.
 9. Within the first year of the next Parliament, publication of a long-term plan to set out how our house-building objectives will be met; to be overseen by a ministerial taskforce on housing, hosted by the Cabinet Office, ensuring that locally-led housing delivery is integrated into infrastructure delivery, welfare reform, rent strategy, demographic and environmental challenges and a wider growth agenda that spreads economic growth across the country.
 10. Allow local housing authorities to suspend the right to buy in their area, or to substitute the right to acquire as held by tenants of Housing Associations, and conduct a full national review of the operation and consequences of the right to buy and right to acquire.

Applicability: England only, except 2 (lines 32-38) which is Federal.

Background briefing

This motion develops policies to build on our existing commitment to a target of building 300,000 new homes a year by 2020. In particular it creates a new policy on the creation of a Housing Investment Bank and the development of a long-term plan to deliver our house building objective.

Previous policies on housing are set out in policy paper 104, Decent Homes For All (2012). Previous policies on land use planning are set out in policy motion Reform of Planning (March 2014).

The Federal Conference Committee accepted a drafting amendment which:

in c) and 5. deleted 'and villages' and inserted ', villages and neighbourhoods'.

Conference accepted an amendment which inserted 10.

F22 Flooding: A New High Water Mark

Conference endorses the Liberal Democrat vision of a sustainable future where we live within our environmental as well as financial means.

Conference notes that:

- A. Flooding is an issue that affects the entire country, with 1 in 6 households at risk.**
- B. Climate change is a driver of more frequent extreme weather and so is likely to be the biggest contributor to worse floods in the future.**
- C. The annual cost to the UK economy of flooding is estimated at £1.1 billion and could rise to over £27 billion per year by 2080.**
- D. Funding for flood defences has increased by £400million over this Parliament compared to the last.**
- E. The Environment Agency estimates that an extra £20 million per year above existing levels needs to be invested in flood defences between 2010 and 2035 to sustain current levels of protection.**
- F. The National Audit Office reported a saving of £8 for every £1 of capital investment in flood defences.**

Conference welcomes the £2billion committed by government to flood defences during the 2011-15 spending period. However, we believe that we also need to meet the long term investment required to maintain the current level of protection.

Conference further welcomes:

- i) The implementation of the majority of the recommendations of the 1998 Pitt Review and resulting 2010 Flooding and Water Management Act by the Liberal Democrats in Coalition Government.**
- ii) The Water Act 2014 and in particular Flood Re which ensures millions of household have access to affordable flood insurance in a progressive and fair way.**

Conference calls for:

- a) Real terms investment in flood defences to increase in accordance with Environment Agency recommendations.**
- b) Monitoring of the availability and affordability of insurance for houses built after 2009 to make sure that affordable flood insurance remains available to all.**
- c) The Government to work with small business organisations and the insurance industry to make sure that small businesses have access to affordable insurance to protect vibrant local economies in flood prone areas.**

Conference recognises that it is more cost effective and sustainable to utilise natural flood defences, working with the environment rather than working against it.

Conference therefore further calls on the Government to:

- 1. Encourage landowners and farmers to manage the countryside to mitigate flooding to downstream communities.**
- 2. Promote research into and implementation of natural flood defences, such as the restoration of peatlands and woodlands, and the development of coastal habitats.**

3. **Develop clear guidance for Lead Local Flood Authorities on how to take flooding into account when planning development and extend the legal requirement for 'betterment' so developers ensure that the flooding situation downstream of any development leads to an improvement, rather than just the maintenance of, flood protection levels.**
4. **Commission a study into how best to improve building regulations so that building works, within the means of the householder and the insurance company, improve the resilience of a building to flooding events.**
5. **Create a monitoring framework for measuring how effective Local Flood Risk Management Strategies are in the medium and long term and set clear targets by which to measure the effectiveness of the National Flood Strategy.**
6. **Ensure that the uptake in Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems is increased to maximise value for money for the taxpayer.**
7. **Ensure that measures are taken to proactively prevent and control flash flooding from endangering life and property.**

Applicability: England only.

Background briefing

This motion updates and develops policy on flooding. Previous policies on flooding are set out in policy motion Managing the Impact and Risk of Flooding (2007).

The Federal Conference Committee accepted a drafting amendment which inserted 7.

Conference rejected an amendment which would have:

deleted:

'maintain the current level of protection' and insert 'protect against the impacts of climate change'.

in a) deleted:

'in accordance with Environment Agency recommendations' and insert 'in line with that needed to protect against climate change impacts'.

in 4. deleted:

'Commission a study into how best to'.

F27 Expanding Opportunity, Unlocking Potential (Equalities Policy Paper)

Conference notes that:

1. **Liberal Democrats are rightly proud of a commitment to equality that goes back decades, and the vision for a fair, free and open society is enshrined in our constitution.**

- II. In government Liberal Democrats have championed equality, working for a fairer society.**

Conference believes that:

- A. There is still much more to be done to reduce inequalities, poverty, and disadvantage for those with protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 - Liberal Democrats want to expand opportunity and unlock potential by promoting equality in education and employment, in health and wellbeing and in an inclusive society.**
- B. Liberal Democrats want Britain to take the lead in tackling inequalities abroad.**
- C. At the heart of our approach is the promotion of human rights to empower individuals to reach their full potential and have more control over their own life, to live in the way that is right for them and free from discrimination.**

Conference therefore endorses policy paper 120, Expanding Opportunity, Unlocking Potential, and particularly welcomes its proposals to:

- 1. Create opportunity in education and employment for all through:**
 - a) Ensuring all young carers receive the pupil premium.**
 - b) Extending the free early years childcare entitlement of 15 hours to all 2 year olds.**
 - c) Ending the opt-out from employment and equalities legislation for staff in faith schools, except those responsible for religious instruction.**
 - d) Repealing the existing legal requirement for all state-funded schools to hold acts of collective worship, and for non-religious schools to hold acts of worship of a broadly Christian character.**
 - e) Promoting apprenticeships for groups underrepresented in the labour market.**
 - f) Encouraging the private sector to promote diversity and requiring private companies in receipt of public funds to monitor and publish equality data.**
 - g) Bringing into force the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 that require private employers to publish data on gender pay gaps.**
 - h) Introducing name-blind applications in the public sector and encouraging their use in the voluntary and private sectors**
 - i) Reviewing the level of employment tribunal fees to ensure they do not deter genuine claims.**
 - j) Establishing a statutory code of practice to support the implementation of the Public Sector Equality Duty.**
 - k) Addressing the management gender gap by recruiting diverse talent.**
- 2. Address inequalities in health and wellbeing through:**
 - a) Extending disabled bus concessions to peak hours.**
 - b) Bringing Equality Act provisions into force which ensure fair access to taxis for people with disabilities.**
 - c) Introducing better regulation for cosmetic surgery to ensure patient safety and closure of fiscal loopholes for those providing purely cosmetic procedures.**
 - d) Introducing compulsory training for front line staff in FGM issues in high risk areas.**

- e) Making legal provision for the full recognition of hate crimes against LGBT+ people and people with disabilities as aggravated offences allowing appropriate sentences for perpetrators.

3. Build an inclusive society that celebrates diversity through:

- a) Accelerating the recognition of caste as an aspect of race under the Equality Act.
- b) Amending marriage certificate rules to allow both parents' name and occupation to be listed.
- c) Asking the Advisory Committee on Safety of Blood, Tissues and Organs to review rules around men who have sex with men donating blood.
- d) Reviewing the Gender Recognition Act to allow married couples consensually to reinstate their marriage when one party to the marriage has reassigned their gender.
- e) Allowing X gender markers on passports.
- f) Including positive images of transgender individuals in central government publications.

4. Work for our vision for equality of opportunity including the promotion of fairness and equality between the citizen and the state, both at home and abroad, through:

- a) Making the Equality and Human Rights Commission directly accountable to Parliament to strengthen its ability to hold the government to account.
- b) Changing the title and responsibilities of the Minister for Faith and Communities to Minister for Faith, Belief and Communities, with responsibility for working with community leaders to promote religious tolerance and stronger communities within the UK.
- c) Moving the Government Equalities Office into Cabinet Office and bring ministerial responsibilities for equalities into one place.
- d) Review anti-discrimination law, guidelines and standards on access to digital goods and services to ensure they are fit for the modern age and to ensure fair access to digital public services, the digital economy and the workplace
- e) Developing an ambitious international gender equality strategy with a clear aim to end female genital mutilation within a generation.
- f) Ratifying the Istanbul Convention on violence against women in the UK and EU and give effect to the United Nations Security Council Resolution 2122, on health care for war rape victims.
- g) Leading the way in forming a clear international strategy to improve LGBT+ rights worldwide.
- h) Continuing to promote same-sex marriage abroad and encourage British embassies overseas to offer same sex marriages.
- i) Upholding freedom of religious belief and the right to choose and change religion or belief, as enshrined in Article 18 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, especially in dialogue with countries that persecute religious minorities.

Applicability: Federal, except 1 a), b) and c) (lines 22-26) which are England only.

Background briefing

This motion and the accompanying policy paper consolidate, update and develop policy on equalities, based on the Liberal Democrat principle of the promotion of human rights to

empower individuals to reach their full potential and have more control over their own lives. In particular they develop policies on increasing representation of women on boards, promoting apprenticeships for groups who are under-represented in the labour market, establishing a statutory code of practice to support the implementation of the Public Sector Equality Duty and advocating equalities internationally, including promoting same sex marriage abroad and developing a strategy to end FGM within a generation.

Previous policies are set out in policy motions A New Liberal Democrat Approach to Race Equality (2013), Preventing Sexual and Domestic Violence (2013) and Equal Marriage in the UK (2010) and policy paper 91 Real Women (2009). Many other policy motions and policy papers also address equalities issues, in particular policy paper 108, A Balanced Working Life (2013), sets out policies on flexible working and parenting.

The Federal Conference Committee accepted a drafting amendment which inserted 4. i).

Conference accepted amendments which:

inserted 1. c) and 1. d); replaced 1. h) which read:

'Piloting 'name-blank' application forms in the public sector.'

and inserted 4. b)

Conference rejected amendments which would have:

after 1. b) inserted:

c) Amending the School Admissions Code to ban selection by faith for new state-funded schools immediately, and to phase out selection by faith for existing state-funded schools over a period of five years, and amending the Equality Act 2010 (Schedule 11, para 5) to remove the exemption of state-funded faith schools admissions arrangements from the Act's prohibition on religious or belief-based discrimination at the end of this period.

after 4. b) inserted:

c) Review anti-discrimination law, guidelines and standards on access to digital goods and services to ensure they are fit for the modern age and to ensure fair access to digital public services, the digital economy and the workplace.

F29 Reclaiming the People's Game

Conference notes that:

- I. Football is the highest participation male and female team sport in Britain, and a major social, cultural and economic force.
- II. Football clubs provide an outlet for civic identity, play an important role in national prestige, and raise the international profile of many regional cities.
- III. The English Premier League is a major UK export, and the world's richest league.

IV. Football also assists in the delivery of many public sector and community projects on health, education, community safety and social cohesion.

Conference is concerned that:

- A. Winning has become the primary motive in the sport - leading to financial risk taking, high debt levels and almost a hundred instances of club bankruptcy since 1992.**
- B. The 'Football Creditors Rule' dictates that when a football club enters administration, any debts owed within football take precedence over all other creditors, including HMRC.**
- C. British football has experienced an influx of overseas investment unjustified on purely financial grounds, and some of these owners have shown a disregard for the heritage of the clubs they have bought.**
- D. A significant proportion of the population has been priced out of regularly attending top-level football matches in England.**
- E. Power within British football has shifted from the national football associations towards the biggest clubs under their jurisdiction.**
- F. The principle of elite clubs redistributing 5% of their income to lower levels of the game as 'solidarity payments' was accepted when the Premier League was established in 1992, but has become eroded over time.**
- G. There have been few non-white football managers within professional football, women are almost entirely absent from club boardrooms, and homophobia remains a problem throughout the sport.**

Conference further notes that:

- i) Germany's football rules require all professional clubs to be majority owned by supporters, and despite having low ticket prices, German clubs are Europe's most profitable.**
- ii) Over twenty five football clubs in Britain have been rescued from financial collapse by their supporters in the last decade, and converted into sustainable, democratic cooperatives.**
- iii) The 2010 Coalition Agreement stated that "We will encourage the reform of football governance rules to support the cooperative ownership of football clubs by supporters".**
- iv) A CMS Select Committee into football governance was established in 2011, but its recommendations have yet to be implemented.**

Conference believes that:

- a) As the public purse provides significant direct and indirect subsidies to football, there is a duty on government to ensure the game is well administered.**
- b) Football needs to thrive at all levels.**
- c) Professional football clubs would not survive without their supporters, and fans should therefore be entitled to input into major decisions affecting their clubs.**
- d) A football club's name, location, badge and home colours are important community and heritage assets, central to the club's history and identity.**

Conference therefore calls for:

- 1. Measures to strengthen democracy, equality and representation within the governance of football including:**
 - a) The establishment of an independent commission, representative of the whole game, to comprehensively review governance to make it more effective, inclusive, and no longer subject to conflicting vested interests.**
 - b) All league-level football clubs in Britain to have an independent and formally recognised Supporters' Trust to represent the views of their fans.**
 - c) Football licensing rules to be reformed to protect the core identity and heritage of football clubs from change without the backing of supporters.**
 - d) All four UK football associations to fully investigate mechanisms to protect individual stadiums, including provisions under the 2011 Localism Act, and publish their findings.**
 - e) All senior clubs to be required to achieve football's 'Equality Standard'; the standard should be revised to ensure that racism, sexism, homophobia and sectarianism are treated equally.**
 - f) Secure, long-term funding to be provided for key stakeholder groups that are promoting representation, democracy, equality and diversity within football; in return, such groups should commit to robust governance and performance agreements.**
 - g) An equality and diversity programme for schools to be funded and introduced by the sport, using the power of the game to promote greater tolerance and respect.**
 - h) A strong, mandatory commitment for all league-level clubs to play an active role within their local communities, with funding available to enable this.**
 - i) Homophobic chanting to be made a criminal offence, on a par with racist chanting.**

- 2. Measures to improve football administration, including:**
 - a) Greater clarity and robustness in the rules regarding what constitutes a 'fit and proper person' to serve as a director or owner of a football club.**
 - b) All stewards working at football games in the UK to have full Security Industry Accreditation, including training on equality and diversity issues.**
 - c) Training on diversity and equality issues to be mandatory for all professional football players, club directors, administrators, referees, and disciplinary commission members in Britain.**
 - d) Clubs to face greater responsibility for the on-pitch behaviour of their players.**
 - e) Training on diversity and equality issues to be made available to all levels of the amateur game for players, clubs and administrators and to be mandatory for referees.**

- 3. Measures to reform football finances including:**
 - a) Abolition of the Football Creditors' Rule.**

 - b) All clubs to be required to provide complete transparency on their ownership.**
 - c) The introduction of 'Financial Fair Play' rules for all league clubs across Britain, with suitable penalties.**
 - d) Ten percent of all tickets for matches at English Premier League, English Football League and Scottish Premier League level to be made available at an 'affordable' price.**

- e) Annual publication by all professional clubs of how much they spend on player agents.
- f) Annual publication by every UK police of the amount it bills individual football clubs for the policing of their games.
- g. A five percent tithe on English and Scottish Premier League TV revenues to fund the strengthening of the game's grass roots and lower leagues, and to ensure greater democracy and equality within the game.

Applicability: Federal.

Background briefing

This motion creates new policies to strengthen democracy, equality and representation within the governance of football, improve football administration and reform football finances. In particular it proposes to make homophobic chanting a criminal offence, on a par with racist chanting, strengthen the 'fit and proper person' rule, and divert a contribution from TV revenues to support the grassroots of the game.

The Federal Conference Committee accepted a drafting amendment which:

in 2. c) inserted ' club directors, administrators, referees, and disciplinary commission members'.

Conference accepted amendments which inserted 1. a) and 2. e).

Conference voted to retain the word 'senior' in 1. e).

F30 A Stronger Economy and a Fairer Society (Pre-Manifesto Policy Paper)

Conference believes that:

- I. Since 2010, the Liberal Democrats have worked in government to rescue and repair Britain's shattered economy.
- II. In the next Parliament, we need to move from rescue to renewal, to think boldly and restore a sense of national optimism.
- III. The task of a liberal party is above all to empower every person to realise their own potential and maximise their wellbeing, no matter what their background, race, colour, disability, age, religion, belief, sex or sexuality.
- IV. The Liberal Democrat vision for the next five years must therefore be to focus our efforts on removing the biggest barriers that are holding people, and holding Britain, back.

Conference therefore endorses policy paper 121, A Stronger Economy and A Fairer Society, as the basis for constructing the party's manifesto for the next general election. Conference welcomes its key commitments to:

- A. Finish the job on the deficit fairly and balance the books so the next generation are not burdened by huge interest payments.**
- B. Rewire the economy to cut out carbon, rebuild our national infrastructure, and embrace new technology, so the next generation can enjoy long-term prosperity and be protected from the threat of runaway climate change.**
- C. Rebalance the tax system away from work and towards unearned wealth, so the next generation can keep more of the money they earn and live in a more equal world.**
- D. Build the homes our country needs to stop prices spiralling out of reach, so the next generation have the chance to bring up a family in a home of their own.**
- E. Return power from the stifling grip of Whitehall to the citizens and communities of our country, so the next generation have the power to shape the society in which they live.**
- F. Restore confidence in Britain's immigration system with fair rules and competent administration, so the next generation can continue to live in an open, tolerant society that benefits from people and expertise from around the world.**
- G. Reaffirm our commitment to a National Health Service which must remain free at the point of delivery, which is focused on increasing wellbeing and enabling people to live fulfilled lives and which makes the aspiration of 'parity of esteem' between mental and physical health a reality.**
- H. Invest every penny we can in education from cradle to college - nursery, school, apprenticeships and college - so all our children get the chance to live out their full potential.**

Conference in particular welcomes its proposals to:

- 1. Finish the job on the deficit and balance the books by:**
 - a) Aiming to balance the structural current budget by 2017/18.**
 - b) Setting a course to reduce debt as a share of national income.**
 - c) Making deficit reduction fair by ensuring high earners and the wealthiest pay their share, including through the introduction of a banded Mansion Tax.**
 - d) Setting new fiscal rules to balance the budget while allowing borrowing for productive investment.**
 - e) Increasing public spending again in line with the growth of the economy once the budget is balanced.**

- 2. Build prosperity that lasts for everyone, founded on strong national infrastructure, a stable, competitive business environment and investment in skills, green technologies and innovation by:**
 - a) Continuing the Regional Growth Fund to back growing businesses, and enhancing the Green Investment Bank.**
 - b) Continuing to invest in High Speed Rail, electrify main lines and re-open local stations, and where possible disused rail, to support people back onto our railways.**
 - c) Introducing a legally-binding decarbonisation target and an indicative renewables target to green our electricity, and action to boost renewable heating.**
 - d) Place the Natural Capital Committee on the same statutory footing as the Committee on Climate Change, tasked with identifying key natural resources being used unsustainably and recommending legally binding targets for reducing their**

net consumption; and introduce incentives for businesses to improve resource efficiency.

- e) Investing to make the UK a world leader in low carbon cars, energy efficiency and hi-tech manufacturing.
- f) Developing a strategic airports policy in the light of the Davies review, while remaining opposed to any expansion of Heathrow, Stansted, Gatwick or any new airport in the Thames Estuary, and ensuring no net increase in runways across the UK as a whole.

3. Put money into the pockets of those who need it most by:

- a) Raising the personal allowance to at least £12,500, cutting your taxes by an extra £400, paid for by measures to raise the tax contribution of the wealthiest, including clamping down on tax evasion and avoidance.
- b) Legislating to make the triple lock permanent, guaranteeing decent pension rises every year
- c) Providing more free childcare: moving to 20 hours a week for working families from the end of paid maternity leave right through to school.
- d) Keeping house prices and rents affordable by aiming to boost house building to 300,000 a year.
- e) Cutting energy bills for everyone with more competition, easier switching and a national programme to insulate homes, with a Council Tax cut if you take part.

4. Create an opportunity society with world class education for all by:

- a) Extending the protection to all education funding from early years through school to college.
- b) Bringing about a revolution in the quality of early years education with qualified teachers in every nursery and an enhanced early years pupil premium.
- c) Delivering a Parents' Guarantee: a core curriculum in every school and every child taught by qualified teachers.
- d) Taking swift action to support and challenge weak schools and colleges.
- e) Introducing a discount bus pass for young people aged 16-21 so they can afford to get to college or work, partly funded by withdrawing eligibility for the Winter Fuel Payment and free TV Licence from pensioners on the higher rate of income tax.

5. Increase wellbeing and enable people to live fulfilled lives, by:

- a) Guaranteeing the NHS budget will rise by at least inflation.
- b) Giving equal rights for mental health patients to get treated just as fast as people with physical health problems by moving towards equality of funding to reflect the respective health need.
- c) Introducing a new £250 'Carer's Bonus' so carers can take a proper break every year.
- d) Encouraging fathers to be more involved by expanding shared parental leave with a 'use-it-or-lose-it' month for fathers.
- e) Enabling heterosexual (opposite sex) partners to enter into a civil partnership.
- f) Massively expanding accessible green space, completing the coastal path and improving the Right to Roam.
- g) Making more sustainable use of resources and reducing waste, including through committing to ending the use of landfill in a generation.

- h) **Pass a Nature Act with a long-term commitment to restore nature - including targets for biodiversity, clean air and water - and empower the Natural Capital Committee to recommend actions to meet these targets.**
- 6. Build strong communities with opportunity for all, through ensuring our laws are upheld firmly and fairly by:**
- a) **Establishing a National Institute of Crime Prevention to cut crime with better policing.**
 - b) **Cutting crime with specialist 'drug courts' that get addicts back on the straight and narrow.**
 - c) **Reforming prisons to focus on turning offenders away from a life of crime.**
 - d) **Bringing back full border checks so we know who's coming in and leaving the UK.**
 - e) **Doubling enforcement of minimum wage laws to tackle illegal working and human trafficking.**
- 7. Transfer power away from Westminster and Whitehall and return it to people, restraining the power of the state to snoop into everyday life and build up citizens and communities to take control over their own destinies by:**
- a) **Protecting privacy through updating data laws for the internet age with a Digital Bill of Rights.**
 - b) **Giving more powers to cities, counties and councils on the economy and local services.**
 - c) **Getting big money out of politics with a £10,000 cap on donations and reform of party political funding.**
 - d) **Promoting a new transfer of powers to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.**
 - e) **Retaining the Barnett Formula as the basis for future spending allocations for Scotland and Northern Ireland, while recognising the findings of the Holtham Commission that the current formula underfunds Wales; we will address the imbalance by immediately entrenching a Barnett floor set at a level which reflects the need for Wales to be funded fairly, and seek over a Parliament to increase the block grant to an equitable level.**
 - f) **Delivering better democracy with votes at sixteen, electoral reform and an elected House of Lords.**
 - g) **Recognising that a diverse and independent media is essential both to a fair and thriving market and to a pluralistic democracy, and therefore introducing new measures to prevent any individual media organisation having too much control of the national conversation against the public interest.**
- 8. Meet the challenges of a globalised, interdependent world by:**
- a) **Legislating to guarantee the UK continues to meet the 0.7% of GNI target for development aid.**
 - b) **Extending the requirement for country-by-country reporting from banks and extractive industries to all UK listed companies.**
 - c) **Working to ensure the UK plays a full part in Europe, and holding an In/Out referendum when there is next any treaty change involving a material transfer of sovereignty from the UK to the EU.**
 - d) **Working to secure binding global agreement on cutting greenhouse gas emissions, and a commitment within the EU to a 50% reduction by 2030.**

e) Leading global nuclear disarmament by reducing our stockpile of nuclear missiles.

Applicability: Federal, except 3 c) (lines 69-71), 4 a)-d) (lines 78-86), 5 a) and b) (lines 92-94), 5 e)-f) (lines 99-103), 7 b) (lines 122-123) and aspects of 4 e) (lines 87-90) which are England only, and 6 a)-c) (lines 106-111) which are England and Wales.

Background briefing

This motion and the accompanying pre-manifesto paper set out the party's policy priorities for the general election manifesto. As such it covers a very wide range of policies, in many cases re-affirming or updating previous policies.

In particular it develops or substantially updates policies on aiming to balance the structural current budget by 2017/18 and setting a course to reduce debt as a share of national income, while allowing borrowing to invest in areas which promote economic growth; extending the protection of education funding from early years, through school, to college; retaining the Barnett Formula as the basis for future spending allocations for Scotland and Northern Ireland, while addressing the underfunding of Wales; putting the environment at the heart of our thinking by introducing five Green Laws (A Nature Act, A Heating and Energy Efficiency Act, A Zero Waste Britain Act, A Zero Carbon Britain Act A Green Transport Act); introducing a 'Yellow Card' before benefit sanctions are applied to give people a warning that benefits could be withdrawn; reforming the spare room subsidy for existing social tenants so that it will not be withdrawn unless they have received a reasonable alternative offer with the correct number of rooms, and so that tenants who have genuine medical need for an extra room or have had their homes substantially adapted do not have benefits reduced; launching a two-thirds discount bus pass for 16-21 year olds; and introducing a national programme to insulate homes, with a Council Tax cut for those who take part.

The Federal Conference Committee accept drafting amendments which:

in III. inserted 'and maximize their wellbeing' and 'disability, age, religion, belief,'

inserted G.

in 2. b) inserted 'and where possible disused rail lines'

inserted 2. d)

in 4. e) deleted 'under-21s' and inserted 'young people aged 16-21'.

in 5. b) inserted 'by moving towards equality of funding to reflect the respective health need'.

inserted 5. e, and 5. h).

and in 7. e) after 'Northern Ireland' deleted 'as the basis for future spending allocations'.

Conference accepted an amendment which inserted 7. g).

Conference rejected amendments which would have:

deleted 5. a) and inserted:

'Guaranteeing a fully integrated NHS and Social Care budget which will rise by at least inflation.'

at the end of the motion, inserted:

Conference therefore calls for an end to the removal of the spare room subsidy for both social and private sector tenants, and calls on Liberal Democrats in Government to ensure that in the meantime tenants will not be subject to any housing benefit deduction until they have received a reasonable offer of alternative social rented accommodation with the correct number of bedrooms.

in 2. e) deleted 'Stansted' to 'whole' and inserted:

'and we restate our very firmly held view that it is totally inappropriate to build a third runway at Heathrow because the noise pollution would be wholly unacceptable to the large numbers of people living in West London under the flight path; our airports policy will be evidence based and designed to limit emissions from aviation to meet our target of Zero Carbon Britain, as part of a lower carbon world. In addition to opposing Heathrow we will act to mitigate noise and air pollution for those living under flight paths, through measures such as improvements to air traffic control technology to decrease stacking, incentives for airlines to switch to new quieter planes and the use of steeper take-off and landing trajectories where appropriate. Within these limits will seek to use the aviation sector to maximise economic opportunities across the UK and help rebalance the economy'.

Conference voted to retain ', and ensuring no net increase in runways across the UK as a whole' in 2. e).

F33 Age Ready Britain (Ageing Society Policy Paper)

Conference notes that:

- I. We are living longer, and how societies adapt to being 'older' is one of the defining challenges of the 21st Century.**
- II. Globally societies are having to adapt to the longer lifespans human ingenuity have made possible; by the end of the century practically every nation on earth will have made the journey.**
- III. Liberal Democrats take an optimistic view of ageing and the opportunities it presents.**

Conference further notes that in government Liberal Democrats have been responsible for:

- A. Major reforms in adult social care and pensions.**

- B. Breaking the deadlock on care finances by implementing the Dilnot Commission cap on catastrophic care costs.**
- C. Overhauling pensions to provide a flat-rate basic state pension, auto-enrolment and fairer access to pension savings.**

Conference resolves to ensure that a holistic approach is taken that recognises ageing is about all of us, our future selves and how we want society to adapt to reflect the profound change that longer lives represent.

Conference therefore endorses policy paper 122, Age Ready Britain, and its policy proposals based on the key principles set out below.

- 1. Promoting wellbeing is central to creating resilient, thriving and sustainable communities and identifying and tackling the causes of intra-generational inequalities; in particular conference welcomes proposals for:**
 - a) Making wellbeing a specific goal of government in general and the NHS and education in particular.**
 - b) Promoting age-friendly communities.**
 - c) An evidence based national wellness programme with Health and Wellbeing Boards leading local partnership work to develop wellness services.**
 - d) Local action to identify and address social isolation and loneliness.**
 - e) Encouraging local government to provide access to community services by telephone, to address social isolation caused by lack of local or home access to the web.**
- 2. The economics of ageing requires an understanding of the income, wealth, health status, educational attainment, gender, ethnic and geographical inequalities within each generation that are likely to determine how well we age; in particular conference welcomes proposals for:**
 - a) Recognising care services as a key part of our economic infrastructure.**
 - b) Reinventing retirement as a 'process' not an 'event'.**
 - c) The introduction of mid-life career reviews.**
 - d) The Office for Budget Responsibility to report annually to Parliament on intergenerational equity.**
 - e) The Treasury to review the impact of longevity risk on the functioning of financial markets including a cost-benefit analysis of longevity bonds.**
- 3. Valuing Carers. Liberal Democrats believe we need to see a shift in how families are supported to balance growing eldercare responsibilities with busy working lives; in particular conference welcomes proposals for:**
 - a) A £250 'Carers Bonus' paid annually towards extra costs such as taking a break by arranging for respite care; we would set this at £125, aiming to double it to £250 by 2020.**
 - b) Carers who need additional flexibility to care for a close family member to have up to 5 days of paid additional 'care leave' a year.**
 - c) The NHS to have a legal duty to identify carers.**
 - d) An NHS 'carers passport' scheme to inform carers of their rights in the NHS.**
 - e) A carer's return to work programme.**

- f) Every government department to model good practice in support for carers.
4. Pensions reforms will boost savings and lift millions of people out of inadequate retirement incomes; in particular conference welcomes proposals for:
- a) The 'triple lock' indexation of the state pension to be made law.
 - b) The principle of auto-enrolment to be extended by increasing the contribution made towards a pension every time an employee receives a pay rise.
 - c) A 'pot-follows-member' policy so that small pension pots are no longer left 'stranded' when people change job.
 - d) People to have access to good quality independent face-to-face guidance including a health and wealth 'resilience score'.
 - e) Withdrawal of Winter Fuel Payments and Free TV Licences for higher rate taxpayers.
 - f) The retention of the concessionary bus travel scheme for pensioners.
5. **Housing and the environment. Accessible, warm, decent housing enables people to remain living well and independently. The physical and social environment around where we live impacts on how we live and our sense of identity; in particular conference welcomes proposals for:**
- a) Strengthening the Housing Strategy for England to meet the needs of an ageing population.
 - b) Local authorities to pilot ways of delivery low or no cost help with right-sizing moves.
 - c) Public health considerations to be integrated in planning policies to ensure that the built environment supports the goals of making our towns and cities age friendly.
 - d) National Planning Practice Guidance and Local Plan guidance to make clear the benefits of safe and attractive streets and open spaces.
 - e) Allow older people currently claiming housing benefit who move in with someone else to keep a portion of that benefit, to encourage better use of our existing housing stock.
 - f) Assist older people on lower incomes make a planned move we will make the purchase stamp duty free for people in receipt of pension credit.
6. Health and Care is co-ordinated around the individual to ensure that people receive the right care at the right time in the right place; in particular conference welcomes proposals for:
- a) The NHS to match the best of Europe on dementia diagnosis rates and care.
 - b) The UK to become the global leader in dementia research, doubling the research spend to £132 million by 2020.
 - c) Free end of life social care for those placed on their local end of life register.
 - d) All patients in receipt of NHS care to be issued with a 'care footprint' to raise awareness of the cost of care and empower people.
 - e) General Practice Federations and Networks to be supported to scale up.
7. Making Britain Age Ready. There is no single action or policy that will prepare the UK for an ageing society - it requires a co-ordinated approach across many areas of public policy to create an age-friendly nation; in particular conference welcomes proposals

for:

- a) A Cabinet Committee on wellbeing and ageing to be established and chaired by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury.
- b) A Minister for Ageing.
- c) A statutory independent Older People's Commissioner.
- d) Realising the potential of Health and Wellbeing Boards as the engine of increased integration of public services by strengthening their capabilities and capacity.
- e) Action to address elder abuse whether at home, hospital or in a care setting.

Applicability: England only, except 2 d) and e) (lines 39-43), 3 a) and b) (lines 48-52), 4 (lines 59-71) and 7 a) and b) (lines 105-107) which are Federal.

Background briefing

This motion and the accompanying policy paper substantially develop and update policies on adapting to the opportunities and challenges of an ageing society. In particular they develop new policies on recognising the vital role of carers by offering a £250 'Carers Bonus' paid annually by 2020; increasing the carers allowance earnings disregard from £100-£150, allowing carers to keep more of what they earn; reforming pensions so that the current 'triple lock' indexation is made permanent through law; requiring the OBR to report annually to Parliament its assessment of the intergenerational implications of pensions, taxation, retirement ages, demand for health and care services; integrate public health considerations into planning policies to ensure that new buildings supports the goals of making our towns and cities age friendly; and making 'wellbeing' a specific goal of government in general and the NHS and education in particular.

The motion and policy paper draw significantly on the quality of life approach previously outlined in policy paper 102, *A New Purpose for Politics: Quality of Life* (2011).

The last comprehensive statement of policy on ageing is policy motion Meeting the Third Age Challenge (2004). The last comprehensive statement of policy on pensions is policy paper 67, *Dignity and Security in Retirement* (2004). Specific policies can also be found in the 2010 general election manifesto *Change That Works For You*, and policy motions *Dignity at Home: Transforming Home Care* (2013) and *Public and Private Sector Pensions* (2012).

The Federal Conference Committee accepted drafting amendments which:

inserted 1. e), 4. f) and 7. e)

Conference accepted an amendment which in inserted 5. e) and 5. f).

Conference voted to retain 4. a), and to retain 5. f) of the amendment.

F35(A) A Holistic Pathway to Peace in the Middle East

Conference condemns:

- A. The sectarian violence and terror that the so-called Islamic State is spreading in Iraq and Syria.**
- B. The systematic kidnapping for ransom or execution of foreign nationals by the so-called Islamic State, including a number of British citizens.**
- C. The recent conflict between Israel and Gaza, in particular the indiscriminate firing of thousands of rockets into Israel by Hamas, Israel's disproportionate military response and the high number of civilian casualties.**
- D. The recent decision by the Israeli government to annex more land in the West Bank for development of settlements which are illegal under international law.**
- E. The continued violent suppression of democratic dissent by President Assad of Syria and the resulting humanitarian catastrophe including the use of barrel bombs.**

Conference notes with concern:

- i) The severity of the humanitarian disasters that have been created by conflicts and instability in the region.**
- ii) The strain that the refugee crises are putting on countries in the region, in particular the strain on Jordan, Lebanon and Turkey.**
- iii) The potential for these humanitarian crises to result in further sectarian division, radicalisation at home and abroad and ongoing violence.**

Conference welcomes:

- a) The Department for International Development's continued commitment to providing humanitarian aid to all those who are suffering in the region, in particular the continued assistance to the millions of refugees and displaced people.**
- b) The Deputy Prime Minister's leadership in the government's commitment to providing asylum in the UK for some of the most vulnerable refugees from the region.**

Conference further welcomes the Israeli government's decision to end import restrictions on humanitarian goods and some construction materials into Gaza.

Conference calls on the UK government to:

- 1. Continue to work closely with our international allies to stop the spread of the so-called Islamic State in Iraq, Syria and beyond.**
- 2. Support the struggling democratic institutions in Iraq and bolster liberalism and inclusiveness in its government.**
- 3. Ensure that if we are to extend military activity to Syria that it is legal under international law, has clear and achievable objectives, has Middle East regional support, includes a comprehensive and well-resourced post-conflict stabilisation strategy agreed with the international community and is authorised by a vote of the House of Commons.**
- 4. Apply continued pressure on the Israeli government to cease its illegal acquisition of land in the West Bank.**
- 5. Encourage the European Union to recognise the State of Palestine within pre-1967 borders and with land swaps agreed by the Israeli and Palestinian authorities through peace negotiations in good faith on the basis of each side's entitlements under international law.**
- 6. Continue to work for freedom of belief, toleration between different faiths, and protection of minorities.**

7. Support programmes in Arab countries aimed at encouraging democracy, freedom of speech, human rights, the rule of law and crony-free economic liberalisation.

Background briefing

This motion develops and updates policy on the latest situation in the Middle East.

Previous policies are set out in policy motions *The Arab Awakening* (2011), *Gaza* (2009), and *Israel and the Palestinian Territories* (2007).

F41 Emergency motion: Towards a Federal UK

Conference celebrates Scotland's decision to remain within the United Kingdom in the referendum of 18th September and believes the nations of Great Britain and Northern Ireland are stronger together.

Conference further believes that Scotland's decision allows the creation of the fully Federal UK long advocated by Liberals and Liberal Democrats.

To that end, Conference calls for the UK Government to take action for Scotland to:

- i) Implement in full the delivery plan for further Scottish powers promised by the three pro-Union party leaders during the independence referendum campaign without any conditionality on progress in other areas.
- ii) Support the proposals detailed in the Scottish Liberal Democrats' report *Federalism: the best future for Scotland* as set out in the pre-manifesto *A Stronger Economy and a Fairer Society*.

Conference further calls on the UK Government to:

- a) Implement the recommendations of the Silk Commission for Wales and address Wales recognised underfunding as set out in the pre-manifesto *A Stronger Economy and a Fairer Society*.
- b) Introduce a Devolution Enabling Bill to Parliament, permitting 'devolution on demand' in England, the transfer of legislative powers from the UK Parliament to councils or groups of councils working together as set out in policy paper 117, *Power to the People*.
- c) Build on the success of City Deals and Growth Deals, by devolving more power and resources to groups of local authorities and local enterprise partnerships.
- d) Empower a constitutional convention, with a citizens' jury at its core, to produce a new written constitution for a Federal United Kingdom, and to further shape new institutions for England.

Conference further welcomes evidence from the independence referendum that citizens will engage with politics and with democracy when they believe their vote makes a difference, and their voice is heard.

Conference therefore renews its call for:

1. Fair votes through STV at every level of election, and an end to 'safe seats'.
2. An elected second chamber, based on the model developed through a decade of cross-party committees and commissions and embodied in the 2012 Coalition Bill.
3. A £10,000 annual cap on donations to political parties to limit the capacity of wealthy backers to buy influence in the political process and access to leading politicians, and reforms to party funding along the lines of the recent report of the committee on Standards in Public Life.
4. Protection of the right for trade union members to consent to a political levy being deducted from their subscriptions, with a new right for each member to choose which party they wish to see receive their donation.
5. The franchise to be extended to all sixteen and seventeen year olds for all elections.

Background briefing

This motion restates previous policy on a Federal UK as set out in policy paper 117, *Power to the People* (March 2014), and updates it in light of the recent referendum

Conference voted to retain c).

F42 Rebanking the UK

Conference welcomes the progress made by the coalition to make the big banks safer and to increase competition between them, including measures to divide investment and domestic operations and to speed the switching of accounts.

Conference notes that:

- a) The UK's competitors and trading partners have powerful and diverse local banking systems that support small-scale enterprise, which the UK still lacks.
- b) Research shows that co-operative and savings banks reduce the drain of capital from urban centres and foster regional equality because of their ability to lend to SMEs.
- c) The big banks no longer want to fulfil the role of lending to small business or manufacturing directly - and are less and less willing to provide them with banking services.
- d) Increasing competition between the big banks, as proposed by Ed Miliband, will not in itself increase the diversity of the UK banking system.

Conference believes that the lack of this lending infrastructure puts our economy at a disadvantage, and makes our cities and regions too dependent on London.

Conference therefore calls for:

1. A duty on banking regulators to promote a diverse banking system in the UK, and a new market in alternative sources of finance for enterprise.
2. A new, diverse local banking system, including community banks and community development finance institutions (CDFIs), funded by the big banks - which will pay for the infrastructure to lend in places and sectors where they are unable to lend

themselves, using their geographical lending data to calculate how much they pay each year.

3. A £100m community finance loan facility via the British Business Bank, to be lent on at low cost by credit unions and CDFIs to SMEs, social enterprises and individual consumers denied access to mainstream credit and finance services.
4. An off-the-peg basic regulatory and IT package to encourage new community banks, and a legal structure for co-operative banks, as there are in most European countries (the UK's Co-operative Bank was owned by a mutual but was not itself mutual).
5. A simple system of resolution to allow small banks to collapse safely if they take wrong decisions, as they have in the USA.
6. An urgent national variation to lending regulations so that SME lending need not cost banks more than other lending.
7. The government to continue to support peer-to-peer lending, crowdfunding and similar internet-based finance in ways which benefit lenders, borrowers and organisations in the sector.
8. The government to allow local authorities and their pension funds to continue to exercise their own judgement over what they invest in, provided it accords with existing rules on prudent financial management, and in the case of pension funds, the objectives of the fund, and recognise the value of their knowledge of the local economy.

Applicability: Federal.

Background briefing

This motion develops policy on promoting a more diverse banking system, including a focus on community banking and finance.

Previous policies on bank reform are set out in policy motion Strengthening the UK Economy (2013), policy paper 105, Sustainable Prosperity and Jobs (2012), policy motion Tougher Action on Banks and Bonuses (2011) and the 2010 general election manifesto Change That Works For You.

The Federal Conference Committee accepted a drafting amendment which:

in 6. after 'to' deleted 'the Basel'.

Conference accepted an amendment which:

inserted 7. and 8.

Conference voted to retain c), 5. and 6.

F44 Protecting Private Tenants

Conference notes that:

- A. 1.3 million households, with 9 million residents in total, rent their homes from private landlords in the UK.

- B. Section 21 of the Housing Act 1988 allows landlords to evict tenants at two months' notice without having to give a reason, provided the tenant is outside the initial secure period of the tenancy.**

Conference regrets that:

- i) One in three privately rented properties in the UK does not meet the Government's Decent Homes Standard .**
- ii) Over 324,000 private tenants per year have been evicted in the last five years after complaining to their landlord or local authority about a problem in their homes.**
- iii) One in eight tenants has not asked for repairs to be carried out for fear of retaliatory eviction.**
- iv) Current housing market conditions allow landlords to evict tenants in the knowledge that they will generally be able to find a new tenant quickly and easily, allowing some landlords to evict tenants rather than carrying out necessary repairs.**

Conference believes that:

- a) Nobody should be forced to live in poor conditions due to their landlord's failure to deal with problems in the property, nor should they be reluctant to report problems due to the fear of being evicted.**
- b) There are many good landlords who respond appropriately when problems are reported by tenants, and this motion does not seek to infringe their rights in any way.**

Conference welcomes the Tenancies (Reform) Bill tabled by Sarah Teather MP in the House of Commons on 2nd July 2014 and co-sponsored by Tessa Munt MP, Tim Farron MP and Andrew Stunell MP which aims to give tenants legal protection against retaliatory evictions, and encourages Liberal Democrats MPs to support it.

Conference further welcomes the excellent campaigning work carried out by Shelter to bring this issue to national attention through its 'Nine Million Renters' campaign.

Conference calls for the following legal protections for private tenants:

- 1. Tenants who report problems with their home to their landlord and are subsequently served a Section 21 Notice should have the right to appeal.**
- 2. Landlords using Section 21 Notices should be made to give their reasons for serving the notice.**
- 3. If an Improvement Notice is served or Emergency Remedial Action taken by the local authority the landlord should not be able to serve a Section 21 Notice for six months.**
- 4. A landlord should not be able to serve a Section 21 Notice within six months of a Hazard Awareness Notice being issued by the local authority.**
- 5. The use of Rent Repayment Orders should be extended to allow tenants to get their rent refunded where a property is found to contain serious risks to health and safety. This provision should apply to current tenants and those who have left the property.**

Applicability: England only.

Background briefing

This motion creates new policy. Previous policy on protection for tenants is set out in policy paper 104, Decent Homes for All (2012).

Conference accepted an amendment which:

inserted 2.

Conference rejected part of the amendment which would have inserted:

6. Housing benefit is paid by local authorities and the local authorities should be able to withhold payment if the premises in question are not up to standard.

Constitutional Amendments & Party Business

F6 Expanding the Democracy of our Party with 'One Member, One Vote'

Conference notes that currently, voting at conference is confined to a limited number of members including MPs, Peers, Prospective UK and European Parliamentary Candidates, Elected Mayors, Leaders of Principal Councils and those who have been elected as Conference Representatives by Local Parties, the number of Representatives being determined by the size of the Local Party.

Conference believes that all members of the Federal Party should be entitled, subject to the payment of the relevant registration fee, to:

1. Vote at Federal conference.
2. Vote for and stand for election to those Federal Committees which include directly elected members.

Conference, however, regrets the multiple flaws in the proposed constitutional and standing order amendments proposed to this conference, and the inclusion of new measures not previously consulted on, including (but not limited to):

- a) Ambiguous or confusing wording in the amendments to Articles 2.7, 7.2 and 8.1.
- b) The failure to amend Article 6.10(h), on the Federal Conference Committee.
- c) The abolition of the requirement for those calling for a special conference to come from 20 different local parties, making it possible for one local party on its own to call a special conference in many cases.
- d) A new and uncosted requirement for policy consultation papers to be sent to every party member, whether or not the party has a working email address for them.
- e) The failure to amend conference standing orders 1.3(b), 1.4, 1.6, 3.1, 3.2 and 4.5, all of

which would retain references to conference representatives despite other amendments abolishing them.

f) The failure to propose any amendments to committee election regulations.

Conference also believes that any expansion of the electorate must be accompanied by other reforms to improve the flow of information on the activity of party committees and their elected members to the newly increased electorate.

Conference therefore agrees in principle to expanding the rights of members as set out above, but subject first to federal conference voting through:

- i) A newly drafted set of constitutional and standing order amendments and election regulations that accurately and comprehensively cover the changes required for implementing this principle.
- ii) Amendments to the party constitution requiring the Federal Conference Committee, the Federal Executive, the Federal Finance and Administration Committee, the Federal Policy Committee and the International Relations Committee each to produce a written report after each full meeting of the committee, with the report to be made available to all party members via the party's website or such other electronic means as the Chief Executive shall decide is practical.
- iii) A new confidentiality policy for attendees at federal committee meetings which significantly relaxes the current de facto situation while protecting necessary confidentiality over personnel decisions and information that would advantage our political opponents if made public and which writes the confidentiality policy into the party's constitution.
- iv) A new process for members of a federal committee to request that a public vote be recorded on any decision, with the terms of the vote and the voting record for each committee member.
- v) One of a range of options tabled to amend the Federal Committee Election regulations to allow more campaigning by candidates and to require any online voting system to prompt voters to first view candidates' manifestos before being able to vote.

Applicability: Federal.

Conference voted to hear reference back, but then rejected referring the motion back.

Conference voted to retain 2.

Conference accepted an amendment which:

at the end of the motion deleted:

'Conference resolves this change should take effect from July 2015'

and inserted from: 'Conference, however, regrets the multiple flaws in the proposed constitutional and standing order' to end of motion.

Conference rejected an amendment which after 'fee' would have inserted:

'if their membership is in at least its second continuous year, and have paid their membership renewal'.

Conference Voted to withdraw agenda items F7 and F8.

F35(B) The FE's Unconstitutional Behaviour and Gender Quotas for Committee Elections

Conference notes that in 2012 conference amended the constitution:

- i) To remove the requirement that at least one third of the directly elected members of federal committees be female and at least one third male, in the light of advice that these provisions were incompatible with the Equality Act 2010.
- ii) To give the Federal Executive powers to impose a gender quota in the short term should the Equality Act be amended too near a conference for a new constitutional amendment to be submitted.

Conference further notes:

- a) That although the Equality Act has not been amended, recent guidance has suggested that gender quotas for committee elections are permissible, and the Federal Executive has accordingly decided to apply a 50 per cent quota for women (only) to the 2014 elections for the directly elected members of the federal committees.
- b) That this decision was taken in principle by the Federal Executive's working group in September 2013, and in its final form by the Federal Executive on 14 July 2014, two days before the deadline for the submission of constitutional amendments to the autumn 2014 conference.
- c) That although there is no reason why the FE could not have acted as previously instructed by conference and brought a constitutional amendment to this conference, and possibly to the spring 2014 conference, it failed to do so.

Conference accordingly censures the Federal Executive for:

1. Acting outside its powers under the constitutional amendment passed in 2012.
2. Taking a decision affecting the composition of the committees elected by conference without giving conference a chance to debate and amend it when it could easily have done so.

Conference believes that as a matter of constitutional procedure and of political principle, decisions affecting the composition of the party's committees should be made by

conference.

Conference rejects that section of the Federal Executive report dealing with gender quotas for committee elections.

Conference nevertheless supports the principle of gender quotas and resolves to introduce for the directly elected components of all committees and other bodies elected by conference representatives in 2014 the following provision, subject to the Party's legal advisors confirming it would be lawful:

Not less than one third or, if one third is not a whole number, the whole number nearest to but not exceeding one third ('the specified number') shall be men and women respectively.

Conference instructs the Federal Executive to consult fully within the party, and then submit a properly written constitutional amendment to a conference before the 2016 round of committee elections, to enable conference to debate arrangements for gender and any other quotas for future elections.

Conference selected Option A:

Not less than one third or, if one third is not a whole number, the whole number nearest to but not exceeding one third ('the specified number') shall be men and women respectively, provided that there is at least twice the specified number of male and female candidates respectively validly nominated by the close of nominations.

Over Option B:

Not less than one half or, if one half is not a whole number, the whole number nearest to but not exceeding one half ('the specified number') shall be men and women respectively, provided that there is at least twice the specified number of male and female candidates respectively validly nominated by the close of nominations.

And Option C:

Not less than one half ('the specified number') shall be women, provided that there is at least twice the specified number of female candidates validly nominated by the close of nominations.

Conference voted to delete "provided ... close of nominations" of Option A.

Conference voted to retain from "Conference nevertheless supports the principle..." to end.

F40 Membership Subscription and Federal Levy

Conference notes that:

- a) **The Federal Executive is proposing that there be no change to the Minimum, Concessionary, or Liberal Youth subscription rates, and no change to the Federal Levy.**
- b) **The Federal Executive is proposing that the recommended rate should rise from £67 to £70.**
- c) **The proposed minimum rate, together with our concessionary rate of £6 for those receiving or entitled to receive state benefits, maintains our position of offering access to the widest possible proportion of society.**

Conference resolves that for the year 2015:

- 1. **The recommended subscription rate shall be £70.**
- 2. **The minimum subscription rate shall be £12.**
- 3. **The concessionary subscription rate for those in receipt of, or entitled to, state benefits other than child benefit or state pension shall be £6.**
- 4. **Those paying their subscription through Liberal Youth shall pay a minimum of £6 or, where a new member joins, a special introductory rate of £1.**
- 5. **Nothing in this motion prevents a State Party from setting a recommended rate or rates of subscription by its internal procedures which is higher than that agreed by the Federal Conference, or from introducing additional concessionary rates.**

Conference further resolves that for the year 2015 the Federal Levy on membership subscriptions shall be 44%.

Applicability: Federal.

Questions to Reports

Federal Conference Committee

Q1 - Submitted by Peter Tyzack: The Scottish referendum affected the date of our conference, and it may be better for us to be after the other Parties, but why did we have to coincide with Eid?

Reply by Andrew Wiseman: Unfortunately all the political parties face difficulty in scheduling their conferences. We (and the other parties) often clash with the Jewish high holidays - the new year and Yom Kippour. This time FCC was left with the difficult choice of having to move our conference. We needed to find a venue that had availability and

negotiate within parliament so that parliament would not be sitting, We took the decision to move our conference. This resulted in, as you mention clashing with Eid but also with Yom Kippour. I would prefer not to clash with any religious holidays but unless all the parties move the conference season to a time of the year with no religious holidays at all that will not happen and all parties will be faced with these clashes.

Q2 - Submitted by Alisdair McGregor: Why has Federal Conference Committee implemented an online webform as a means of submission which does not permit the full range of submission support to be included?

Reply by Andrew Wiseman: The online form was trialed at Spring Conference 2014, along with active promotion of the motions@libdems.org.uk email address. It was also used for the earlier deadline for submission of motions and this issue was not raised. Having said that it is something we would want to change.

We are actively promoting the online form, rather than the email address (however we still receive and deal with any emails that came into the inbox as well). The reason for the online form is so that the submissions are much more easily collated with less opportunity for mistakes. Previously staff would have taken 2-3 days to put together that 116 page document, whereas now it only takes 1-2 hours. Taken over the course of all the deadlines through a whole year, that would save over 2 weeks work.

The feedback we have received is that the online form also makes it easier for people to submit (we had over 150 submissions at the most recent deadline, which I believe is an increase on previous years). There is absolutely no problem making the change for next time and I have asked for this to happen.

Q3 - Submitted by Mark Pack: What were the dates and locations of publication of the meeting reports promised for after each committee meeting at the March conference Q & A?

Q4 - Submitted by Robbie Simpson: What policies do the Federal Conference Committee and the Conference Office have with regards to the acceptance of bookings for conference fringes and exhibition space by organisations linked to repressive or dictatorial foreign governments?

Federal Policy Committee

Q1 – Submitted by Mark Pack: What were the dates and locations of publication for the meeting reports promised after each committee meeting promised at the March conference Q&A

Reply by Duncan Hames MP: This was something we were asked to do some time ago, before that in fact, and we on the FPC did make a start on producing these reports. Some appeared on a previous version of the Party's website and others on Liberal Democrat Voice. But, I'm afraid this is a practice that fell into abeyance and I will take back to the FPC, which is re-elected after this conference, the reminder that this is a promise that we've made to conference and I suppose, it's also therefore an opportunity for you as conference delegates and representatives, in that election, to recognize those candidates that are committed to making sure that we resume this practice as a committee.

Q2 – Submitted by Gareth Epps: Why have the public announcements been made that policies will be in the manifesto when the committee that decides the manifesto has not yet been elected, and when it is known that making such a statement, as opposed to 'this policy will be in the pre-manifesto', is unnecessary and misleading?

Reply by Duncan Hames MP: We did agree, as a committee, earlier this summer, that as proposals reach the stage of having been agreed by the FPC, that we would permit our communications staff at HQ to develop a program to communicate them more widely to the general public over the course of the summer in what we called our 'Summer Campaign'. And, I think that was actually rather successful in getting a lot of attention during the quieter political period to policies, some of which were not new but were long standing policies which we wanted people to understand we were committed to taking forward in the future.

I, as chair of the FPC, have not made the mistake that you outline in your question. Ultimately, I suppose, the way these announcements are reported is not entirely within our control but I hope that whenever I've had the chance to get this across, I've reminded people that our pre-manifesto is very much subject to the decisions made by our Party at conference.

Supplementary Question by Gareth Epps: I did also raise the matter with the chief executive but it took 3 months to get a reply. Duncan, recognising that this is a problem about, in effect, careful use of language, as I said, there is nothing wrong with policy announcements, perhaps you and perhaps I and others could brief the parliamentary party on what the difference is between the pre-manifesto and the manifesto?

Reply by Duncan Hames MP: Thanks for that suggestion, Gareth. Perhaps that's a good idea. But I would also offer a piece of contrary council, which is: if we were to go around saying, about the pre-manifesto, that these are policies that we like but may or may not be in our manifesto at the next general election, I think that could be quite misleading as well because although we haven't written our manifesto yet, although we haven't agreed it through our Party's democratic processes, I would suggest that some of the items in our Pre-manifesto are almost inevitably going to be in our manifesto at the next general election because we know the whole Party is so proud of them and because they haven't just been dreamt up on the back of a cigarette packet but have actually already made it through several democratic hurdles through the policy making process of our Party. So, to leave the public or the media in doubt as to whether policies such as raising the personal allowance to £12,500, giving ordinary working people a £400 tax cut, may or may not be in our manifesto at the next general election would, I think, not pay any respect to the support that that policy has already received on a number of occasions here at Party conference.

Parliamentary Parties of the Liberal Democrats

Q1 - Submitted by Andrew Hudson: Will the parliamentary party seek to amend the Modern Slavery Bill to incorporate the recommendations of the joint parliamentary committee regarding slavery in the supply line?

Reply by Don Foster MP: The Modern Slavery Bill is something that Liberal Democrats are delighted is before us in both Houses of Parliament. The Bill will give more powers to the authorities to protect those that are the victims of modern slavery. It introduces, for instance, the creation of a statutory defence for victims of modern slavery who are forced to commit a crime and that way insuring that they are not being treated as criminals in the justice system. Andrew specifically asked whether the Liberal Democrat Parliamentary Party will be prepared to move an amendment to take the Bill still further, as recommended by the joint parliamentary committee, in an issue about the supply chain. Andrew - I'm absolutely delighted to tell you that the parliamentary party will do this. I'm delighted to be able to tell you that we will do rather sooner than you might have expected because in fact, on Tuesday week, the Rt Hon Andrew Stunnell MP will be moving his new Clause 25 to the Modern Slavery Bill will amends the Companies Act and places a duty on companies to validate, as you have requested and the committee requested, their supply line. So the simple answer to your question, Andrew, is yes we will.

Supplementary Question by Andrew Hudson: is Don aware that what I am proposing is now party policy and has been since Saturday, with the Baron Furness drafting amendment?

Reply from Don Foster MP: Yes, I'm delighted that therefore the parliamentary party was almost ahead of Party conference overall but we are now united and Andrew Stunnell will be our champion on behalf of all Liberal Democrats on this particular issue. Andrew, thank you for being a champion for it as well.

Q2 - Submitted by Andrew Hudson: Is the part of the Infrastructure Bill dealing with alien species control orders fit for purpose?

Reply from Lord Dick Newbie: I should make it clear from the start that we are not talking about the legislative position relating to John Redwood but we are talking about species such as a particularly nasty North American bullfrog which I'm told eats every type of amphibian it comes across. Susan Kramer is the minister taking these provisions in the Lords and she is in the process of listening to, and responding to, a number of views expressed during committee stage. Kate Parminter has been leading for the group and has raised a number of issues in this area. But, the main thrust of the proposals is to deal with the very rare circumstances in which an invasive, non-native species is identified on someone's property and the environmental authority is unable to reach an agreement with the property owner to gain access to the property to deal with the problem. The Bill would create species control orders which can be made after 42 days or if they receive a categorical response from the owner saying they won't enter into such an agreement. It is very rare that such agreements cant, in reality, be reached. At the moment it is around 5% of the total number of cases where action is needed to stop the spread of such a species that's dangerous to UK ecology and it's estimated that if the provisions are passed, they

are likely to be used only about once a year. So, we are dealing with a very narrow problem here and doing it in a very tightly defined manner.

Supplementary Question by Andrew Hudson: I spent a considerable amount of the summer removing Himalayan Balsam and I spent some time in South Africa removing prickly pear from a game reserve so I'm no fan of invasive species but I'm concerned at the way it's defined. Certainly, recently re-introduced species such as the Red Kite and the Barn Owl could be affected by it for some land-owner who wants to get rid of them. Personally, I think it's something we should give a hoot about.

Reply by Lord Newbie: Well, I absolutely agree. There is an issue about whether the provisions might capture some native species as you've mentioned and this was one of the issues that was raised at length in committee stage and I know that Susan Kramer is looking in to this. I will obviously pass on your concerns to her.

One point to make about the House of Lords dealing with a piece of legislation like this is that we have a pretty good track record I think – particularly given Liberal Democrat involvement – in improving Bills as they go through the House of Lords. In this case I don't think there's much doubt that there's more or less consensus about what we are trying to achieve but what we are looking at is to make sure that, when we finally pass the bill, we've made any tweaks that are necessary to make sure that we have actually achieved what the political intention behind the bill is. So, thank you very much for the questions and I'll pass them on to Susan.

Q3 - Submitted by Sarah Noble: Why was the vote regarding airstrikes on Islamic State targets in Iraq subject to a three-line whip, instead of being designated a free vote as a conscience issue?

Reply by Don Foster MP: Colleagues, I think we all will accept that ISIL is an evil and barbaric organisation and what they did recently in the beheading of Alan Henning should be condemned by every single Liberal Democrat and everybody in this country. I think it is important, colleagues, to recognise the situation that Parliament found itself in when we were recalled, some 10 or 11 days ago. We had received, as the UK Government, a very specific request, for specific assistance from the Iraqi Government itself. A Government that, of course, is itself Islamic. And their request for help was supported by 48 other countries who had already come to provide assistance in one form or another. The motion that was put before Parliament was a motion that asked for very specific help in terms of targeted bombing, using the particular skill and expertise and equipment that this country possesses. It also required us to provide additional support to the ground troops being provided by the Iraqi military and the Kurdish forces and of course to commit to improving still further the great humanitarian assistance that this country, currently the second largest donor of humanitarian support, to go even further in that regard.

The question asks, why was this a three line whipped vote and not given a free vote as a matter of conscience. And, the answer is quite simply that this was a motion that was put forward after considerable debate between the coalition parties and indeed with the Labour party as well, and was brought forward as a government motion. In those circumstances, it is appropriate and right that there be a three line whipped vote on the issue. And, in those circumstances, 48 parliamentary colleagues voted for the motion, one voted against the motion and the remainder were understandably absent for very good reasons, for instance colleagues in faraway countries like Alaska. And the point I make is

that one colleague did vote against. Just because it is a three line whip vote does not mean that people cannot use their conscience, as Julian Huppert did. And Julian Huppert went through the appropriate procedure that is laid down by the Parliamentary party in those circumstances. He discussed the issue with the relevant spokes people, he discussed it with me as Chief Whip, he attended the debate and participated in it and then in those circumstances, was perfectly entitled to use his conscience and vote against. But it was a three line whip vote. I think that was the appropriate thing to do. And I hope that we all will continue to do all we can to support all of those who are doing all they can from our military in the work they are doing to try to bring to an end the evil work that is being done by ISIL at the present time.

Supplementary Question by Sarah Noble: Does the Government not have concerns that, just as the invasion of Iraq in 2003 has probably caused the current crisis, that any further military action could – and I know it does sound rather, I'll try and find the word, rather inconceivable at the moment – does the Government not have concern that further military action could lead to more extremism in the middle east?

Reply by Don Foster: I think there can be no question that taking any form of action has with it a number of dangers, but I think – I hope conference would recognise – that there is a huge difference between what happened when we went out and campaigned against the war in Iraq and what is happening on this occasion. On the first occasion, this was a war against Iraq. This is now, what we are doing, military action is in support of and at the request of the legitimate government of Iraq. I think there are fundamental differences between the two situations. Of course, we understand the risks that are taken. Of course, these have been very carefully weighed up. But it important to recognise that we are providing very specific forms of help based on what we are most capable of providing. And that we are doing it in conjunction with a very large number of countries from around the world including very many countries in the region who have also requested our support.

Can I just end by saying that in doing my job as chief whip, I can't do it without the support of an incredible group of people who work in the whips office. So, I'd like to end, unless any further questions come forward, by saying a huge thank you to all of my staff. Thank you. I know they are somewhere up there. Thank you very much indeed.

Federal Executive

Q1 - Submitted by Colin Rosenstiel: On what basis has the FE "agreed that half the elected positions to Federal Committees must be filled by women", in effect overriding the previously agreed constitutional requirements on gender balance of a minimum one third of each gender, without bringing a constitutional amendment to this conference?

Q2 - Submitted by Duncan Brack: Article 2.4 of the constitution permits the FE to impose gender or other quotas on the outcome of federal committee elections if the 2010 Equality Act is amended to close to a conference to permit the submission of a constitutional amendment. Since the Act has not been amended, why is the FE imposing quotas?

Q3 - Submitted by Duncan Brack: Since the FE took the decision to apply gender quotas to the outcomes of this year's federal committee elections before the deadline for the

submission of constitutional amendments, why did it not submit a constitutional amendment to conference?

Q6 - Submitted by Gareth Epps: Why has the FE decided to take action to impose quotas for Federal Committee elections based on one protected quality characteristic but not others; and what evidence base was used to weigh up participation based on characteristics other than gender?

Q7 - Submitted by Gareth Epps: Why has the FE not introduced a constitutional amendment to this Conference with regard to gender quotas when they have been discussing the proposal for months?

(Q1, Q2, Q3, Q6, and Q7 taken together)

Reply by Tim Farron MP: There is currently no requirement in the Constitution for any gender balance on Federal Committees.

The decision to include a quota on this occasion was done on a trial basis for this set of elections only, based on advice obtained relating to the Equalities Act 2010. The legal advice received stated, if the Party reasonably thinks that women suffer a disadvantage because of their sex, or their participation in an activity (for example sitting on Party Committees) is disproportionately low, the Party is permitted to take action with the aim of enabling or encouraging women to overcome or minimise that disadvantage or participate in Party Committees."

On Question 2, FE also discussed advice from the Government Equalities Office that stated, contrary to earlier legal advice, that parties may if they wish to, create dedicated committees exclusively for women and reserve seats on committees or groups that are not exclusively for women. In line with this advice, and a request from the Federal Appeals Panel to decide on the party's position on the legality of quotas for party bodies, FE concluded that quotas were an appropriate measure to take.

This is why the action we have taken solely relates to the case of women. We are carrying out a full diversity monitoring process during this set of elections, which will provide data for further quotas in future elections. We will of course return to conference with a full set of proposals when sufficient data has been gathered.

We were not able to bring a constitutional amendment because of the timing of the legal advice we received. It arrived after Spring Conference. If it had been submitted to Autumn Conference, it would have meant the rules of an election had been altered midway through an election, which quite rightly could have been ruled to be unconstitutional. Clearly conference has decided to censure the FE for the way we acted, and I accept that censure.

FE and I firmly believe that as a party we must improve the diversity of our representation. Although we can argue about the way in which this has been implemented, I'm not going to apologise for trying to increase the involvement of women in our party democracy.

(Q4 and Q8 taken together)

Q4 - Submitted by Gareth Epps: Where is party strategy decided, and when was the last time the FE had a full debate on strategic issues with the expectation of decision-making?

Q8 -Submitted by Gordon Lishman: Who takes decisions on the party's strategy? How many written reports have been provided in the last two years as a basis for their decisions?

Reply by Tim Farron MP: FE works in tandem with our professional staff, the Leader, and Party President to debate and decide on party strategy. FE's work is largely consensual and productive – we feed in to strategy processes and steer the work done in other areas of the party. We have strategic discussions and take decisions at every FE meeting.

It is difficult to quantify papers written relating to strategy, as they encompass everything from employment to campaigning tools to functions delegated to sub-committees such as the Campaigns and Communications Committee (CCC). James Gurling reports from Wheelhouse to CCC and the FE receives reports from CCC.

Q5 - Submitted by Gareth Epps: When did the Chief Officer's Group last meet?

Reply by Tim Farron MP: The Chief Officer's Group was set up at a result of the Bones Report in 2008. It remains in the FE Standing Orders as a potential committee, but in practice its functions have been rolled back into FE proper. It has not met since autumn conference 2011.

Q9 - Submitted by Gordon Lishman: How many times in the last 2 years, has the FE received reports as a basis for decisions on the work and priorities of the Wheelhouse?

Reply by Tim Farron MP: FE delegates campaigning decisions to the Campaigns and Communications Committee. The Chair of CCC, James Gurling, is a member of the Wheelhouse in this capacity and he, as well as members of Wheelhouse, report back to FE on a regular basis.

Paddy Ashdown, as Chair of the Wheelhouse and General Election campaign has been in person to receive FE views on the 2014 election review and has agreed to come along to future meetings.

Q10 - Submitted by Gordon Lishman: Who decides on the Party's messages and slogans? On how many occasions in the last two years have proposals with alternatives been made to them?

Reply by Tim Farron MP: We employ professional staff who make recommendations based on wide-ranging research and polling. Recommendations go to CCC and the Wheelhouse. Specifically, sign off was sought from James Gurling as Chair of the Campaigns and Communications Committee, Nick Clegg as Party Leader, and Paddy Ashdown as Chair of the 2015 Election Campaigns.

In response to the nearing general election and thoughts raised during the recent election review, a revised slogan and message script are in the process of being agreed.

Q11 - Submitted by Gordon Lishman: What does the President understand about FE's responsibility for "directing co-ordinating and implementing the work of the Party" and how has he fulfilled this role?

Reply by Tim Farron MP: Being in government has presented a unique challenge to FE's ability to direct the work of the Party. As Chair of FE, I have tried to make sure that FE has input into fundamental strategic decisions relating to our role in government, and where that has not been possible we have held our leadership to account. I have also ensured that we work closely and effectively with our professional team in headquarters – helping us to work on major projects such as increasing our membership and introducing One Member, One Vote.

I also want to make clear that FE has a number of brilliant and experienced members who spend considerable time supporting the party at all levels. But that we must also not stray into doing the work of our professional party. As a FE, we agree priorities and projects – but it's not our job to micro-manage every one of our very able staff.

Q12 - Submitted by Gordon Lishman: How many reports has the FE received on management of the Party's assets, risk management, internal and external audit, crisis management and disaster recovery?

Reply by Tim Farron MP: The functions in the question are delegated to the Federal Finance and Administration Committee. The Chair of the FFAC is a non-voting member of the FE and he reports back to the committee on FFAC's discussions and decisions.

Q13 - Submitted by Gordon Lishman: To whom is the Chief Executive accountable? What systems are there for appraisal, personal development and target-setting and how many formal appraisals have taken place?

Reply by Tim Farron MP: The Chief Executive is line-managed by the Party President. Appraisals and target-setting take place on a yearly basis across the Federal organisation.

Q14 - Submitted by Mark Pack: What were the dates and locations of publication of the meeting reports promised for after each committee meeting at the March conference Q & A?

Reply by Tim Farron MP: This was something that was agreed to at Spring Conference in York. We have not as yet started uploading the meeting reports as agreed because of delays caused by a staff handover. We will endeavor to do this as soon as possible.