



Conference Report
Liberal Democrat Autumn Conference
Bournemouth 2015

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Policy Motions

Creating Safe and Legal Routes for Refugees

Conference notes that:

- I. There are currently almost 20 million refugees worldwide, who have fled war and persecution, including nearly four million refugees who have fled the ongoing conflict in Syria.
- II. The vast majority of refugees are hosted by developing countries; for example, only six percent of Syrian refugees have sought safety in Europe.
- III. Increasing numbers of people are attempting extremely dangerous journeys across the Mediterranean, with over 100,000 arriving in Europe by sea and nearly 2,000 people dying making the journey in the first five months of 2015 alone.
- IV. 33% of those crossing the Mediterranean have fled war-torn Syria, 10% have fled Eritrea, and 18% have fled Somalia and Afghanistan.

Conference welcomes the Liberal Democrat commitment to give sanctuary to UN refugees, as stated in the party's 2015 General Election Manifesto, Stronger Economy. Fairer Society. Opportunity for Everyone and to increase the number of UN refugees resettled in the UK to 1,500 a year, in line with the campaign by Citizens UK.

Conference expresses concern that:

- A. In responding to the migration crisis, Conservative ministers have used dehumanising language to condemn the actions of refugees fleeing war and persecution, and have failed to recognise or address the humanitarian crisis.
- B. Some governments across Europe, including the UK, are making it increasingly difficult for those fleeing war and persecution to seek safety on the continent by removing safe and legal routes and creating 'Fortress Europe'.
- C. The lack of safe and legal routes is forcing refugees to make dangerous journeys, resulting in the loss of life.
- D. Current UK policy limits the safe and legal routes available, including through a limited number of places for resettled refugees and overly restrictive family reunion rules that prevent, among others, adult children being reunited with their parents and siblings.
- E. Last December, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees called on governments around the world to provide resettlement and other forms of admission for 130,000 Syrian refugees by the end of 2016, yet the United Kingdom has only pledged to resettle several hundred of the most vulnerable Syrian refugees, and by the end of March 2015, just 187 Syrians had been resettled here.

Conference calls on the Government to:

1. Create more safe and legal routes for refugees to seek safety in the UK by:
 - a) Significantly increasing the number of refugees resettled in the UK through UNHCR programmes, offering a minimum of 10,000 per year rather than hundreds of places to those fleeing war and persecution including via an EU resettlement scheme.

- b) Making it easier for refugees to join relatives already living in safety through UNHCR programmes in the United Kingdom.
 - c) Accept that the best way of arresting smuggling is creating safe and legal routes for refugees, as well as participating fully in EU efforts to tackle criminal people-smuggling which exploits the misery and desperation of vulnerable people, instead of taking a minimalist approach to EU police and crime cooperation.
2. Work together with partners in the EU to find sustainable solutions to the current and long-term migration crisis which has particularly affected Italy and Greece, including opting into a relocation scheme to offer asylum to the most vulnerable refugees from Syria, Eritrea and Iraq.
 3. Take leadership within the EU in support of multilateral efforts to help refugees and displaced persons within their own regions and in support of host countries in North Africa and the Middle East which are assisting large numbers of refugees.
 4. Continue to advocate for, and contribute to, the European search and rescue operation in the Mediterranean to save the lives of those who are forced to make dangerous journeys.
 5. In the long-term, tackle the root causes of why people become refugees so that fewer people feel compelled to flee their homes.
 6. Reaffirm the UK's international commitment to give protection to those fleeing war and persecution.

In addition, Conference calls on local councils, particularly those that are run by the Liberal Democrats, to be generous in offering housing and other support to incoming refugees.

Applicability: Federal

Background Briefing

This motion updated policy on resettlement of refugees in light of the ongoing migration crisis in the Mediterranean. It built on existing policy as set out in the General Election Manifesto, Stronger Economy. Fairer Society. Opportunity for Everyone (2015) and policy paper 116, Making Migration Work for Britain (2014).

Drafting Amendments: *The Federal Conference Committee accepted drafting amendments which:*

Deleted ii) and renumbered appropriately.

After 4, added:

"In addition, Conference calls on local councils, particularly those that are run by the Liberal Democrats to be generous in offering housing and other support to incoming refugees."

Amendments: *Conference voted to accept two amendments.*

The first amendment inserted A; in B before 'governments' inserted 'some' and after 'Europe' inserted 'including the UK'; in 1. a) after 'persecution' inserted 'including via an EU resettlement scheme'; inserted 1. c); inserted 2; and inserted 3.

The second amendment, in 1. a) (line 41), deleted 'thousands' and inserted 'a minimum of 10,000 per year'.

Delivering the Housing Britain Needs

Conference believes that an adequate supply of decent homes at a cost people can afford is essential to personal fulfilment, economic stability, and community wellbeing.

Conference notes that:

- I. The demand for new homes is increasing due to factors including rising life expectancy and the growing number of one-person households.
- II. Too many homes are left standing empty for large parts of the year.
- III. Britain has failed for decades to build enough homes.
- IV. Home ownership in the under 40s is falling rapidly and many young people are priced out of the private rental market.
- V. The Right to Buy and the reduction in social rented building has led to insufficient housing for those who cannot afford to buy or pay market rents – and a steadily increasing burden on the state (now over £20 billion a year) of housing benefit payments, with increasing amounts going to private landlords.
- VI. Steps taken by Liberal Democrats in the previous government led to an increase in the supply of housing to nearly 150,000 a year.
- VII. Some housing associations are setting their affordable rent at the same level as the current housing benefit cap, which could be subject to reduction in future budget reviews.
- VIII. Intermediate/shared ownership schemes in many places frequently require a household income that is significantly higher than the median wage for the area.
- IX. The Government's plan to charge higher rent to existing social housing tenants with incomes greater than £30,000 (and £40,000 in Greater London) will make continued renting of council properties impossible for many existing tenants with hugely adverse financial and social consequences.
- X. The 2014 study by the University of the West of England demonstrating that there is sufficient space on brownfield land to build a further million homes.

Conference notes with concern that the Conservative Government has not committed to building the 300,000 homes Britain needs each year.

Conference deplores:

- A. The Government's plans to extend Right to Buy to Housing Association properties, which will lead to a drastic reduction in the amount of social and affordable housing available, fail to help those in greatest housing need, provide poor value to the taxpayer, and are likely to be subject to legal challenges by housing associations as they object to what is essentially expropriation of their assets by the state.
- B. Conservative plans to force councils to sell off their most valuable housing stock which will create 'social cleansing' in high value areas, push up living costs of less affluent residents forced to live further from jobs, and lead to a shortage of affordable housing for larger families.

Conference therefore calls on the Government to abandon its plans to extend Right to Buy to Housing Association properties and to force councils to sell off their most valuable

housing stock.

Conference instead calls for the implementation of policies to increase the availability of housing especially for those on a low income, including:

1. An ambitious target to increase the rate of house building to 300,000 homes a year – in line with the demand for social rented housing there should be an increase to around 30% in the proportion of new housing built by Local Councils and Housing Associations, funded as in 2., 5., 6. and 7. below.
2. A government commissioning programme to boost sustainable house building, remedying market failure through capital investment to tackle inequalities in the housing market, and providing adequate supplies of affordable housing as part of a balanced mix of tenure.
3. Local Authorities to be required to make a plan for 15 years of housing need.
4. At least ten new Garden Cities in England.
5. Ambitious targets for development on unwanted public sector sites, with priority given to social housing where there is a shortage of council-owned land to deliver this.
6. Local Authorities to be allowed more flexibility to borrow to build affordable housing and encouraged to take responsibility for housing delivery in their areas, including by directly commissioning or developing homes of all tenures.
7. Devolution of full control over the Right to Buy council housing to local authorities.
8. Local Authorities to be allowed to:
 - a) Attach planning conditions to new developments to ensure homes are occupied, tackling the growth of 'buy to leave empty' investments from overseas in property hotspots like London.
 - b) Levy up to 200% Council Tax on second homes where they judge this to be appropriate.
 - c) Pilot new planning conditions to ensure local communities benefit from increased housing supply in addition to the incentives available through the Community Infrastructure Levy.
 - d) Pilot new planning conditions that would invoke a 'use-it-or-lose-it condition' requiring developers to build their scheme within three years of receiving planning permission to ensure developers do not 'land bank' accumulated permissions, but rather that local communities benefit from the planning permissions granted.
9. Restoration of the housing grant for Registered Social Landlords (RSL) and greater Local Authority control over the affordable rent setting for RSL housing in areas where market rents are disproportionately higher than the median income.
10. A higher income threshold for housing authorities where social housing rents are raised for existing tenants, the levels to be fixed by an independent body to be established by agreement between HMG and the LGA.

11. A government scheme to provide financial incentives to develop unviable brownfield sites including grants for the restoration of contaminated land.

Applicability: England only, except the pledge in 1. to build 300,000 homes a year which is Federal

Background Briefing

This motion reaffirmed and updated policy set out in the General Election Manifesto, Stronger Economy. Fairer Society. Opportunity for Everyone (2015), and in policy motion Building the Affordable Homes We Need (2014).

Drafting Amendments: *The Federal Conference Committee accepted drafting amendments that:*

- *In 2, after 'boost' inserted 'sustainable'*
- *In 2, after 'building' inserted 'remedying market failure through capital investment to tackle inequalities in the housing market, and providing adequate supplies of affordable housing as part of a balanced mix of tenure'*
- *In 8 c), after 'supply' inserted 'in addition to the incentives available through the Community Infrastructure Levy'.*

Amendments: *Conference voted to accept three amendments.*

Amendment One inserted V, and added to 1. "in line with the demand...private landlords."

A separate vote was held on lines of Amendment One which would have required councils to use Right to Buy receipts to invest in new social housing. These lines were deleted from the Amendment.

Amendment Two inserted VII, VIII, IX, 5, 9, and 10, and inserted "especially for those on a low income" prior to 1.

Amendment Three inserted X.

Energy and Democracy

Conference notes that:

- A. The new UK government is introducing measures to fast track shale gas drilling planning applications and undermine the democratic integrity of local decisions.
- B. At the same time they are withdrawing pre-registration of small scale renewable schemes, and lowering feed-in tariffs, increasing the financial risks for individual and community schemes.

Conference recognises that:

- i) Local battles over fracking planning applications, in places such as Ryedale and Lancashire, urgently need our support.
- ii) Small scale, community renewable energy schemes democratise the energy market and deserve our support.

Conference calls on the Government to:

- 1. Respect local decisions on both renewable energy and fracking, and significantly reduce the frequency with which they are overridden after being called in to be reviewed centrally.
- 2. Maintain the practice of permitting small scale renewable energy schemes to pre-register for government support.
- 3. Provide people with access to independent expert advice on finding finance and gaining planning permission for domestic and community renewable energy schemes.

Applicability: England and Wales.

Background Briefing

This motion updated policy on energy, including on fracking and renewable energy. Previous policy is set out in the General Election Manifesto, Stronger Economy. Fairer Society. Opportunity for Everyone (2015), and policy paper 109, Green Growth Green Jobs (2013).

Human Rights

Conference believes that:

- I. Human rights and civil liberties are fundamental to a fair, free and open society. They are vital to ensuring that the state is appropriately constrained and accountable for its use of power.
- II. Human rights laws protect everyone, not only weak and vulnerable people, for example they have:
 - a) Stopped the state spying on citizens, supported peaceful protest and protected soldiers.
 - b) Helped rape victims, defended domestic violence victims and guarded against slavery.
 - c) Enhanced media freedom, protected whistle-blowers and provided answers for grieving families.
 - d) Preserved the right to a fair trial, prevented indiscriminate stop-and-search and protected minorities.
 - e) Helped elderly people subjected to physical abuse in their care homes and patients who suffered inhumane and degrading treatment at Mid Staffordshire NHS Trust.
 - f) Ended corporal punishment in schools and protected parents' rights in care proceedings.
- III. Liberal Democrats recognise the leading role the UK took in drawing up the European Convention on Human Rights after the Second World War, based on long-standing British traditions of civil liberties.
- IV. Membership of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) is particularly important for the UK because among its 46 signatories the UK is in a very small minority in not having its own written constitution.
- V. The UK has a vital role in showing world leadership in the upholding of universal human rights, which would be wrecked by the UK joining the pariah states who reject international human rights agreements.
- VI. While UK law enforcement and intelligence agencies have a vital role in protecting the public and investigating criminal activity, we must ensure the state does not over-reach the bounds set by the ECHR in pursuing those roles.
- VII. Transparency and independent scrutiny of the activities of security agencies is vital.

Conference applauds the fact that Liberal Democrats in Government in the last Parliament blocked Conservative plans to repeal the Human Rights Act and the Conservatives' Communications Data Bill (the so-called 'Snoopers' Charter') which would have forced internet service providers to keep records of citizens' texts, emails and every website visited. Conference notes that the previous Labour Government attempted to introduce similar legislation.

Conference is therefore deeply alarmed by:

- i) The threat posed to human rights in the United Kingdom by Conservative plans to replace the Human Rights Act with a British Bill of Rights, which could weaken the protection of human rights in Britain, including the right to privacy and family life.
- ii) The unwillingness of many Conservatives to accept the decisions of the European Court of Human Rights and to abide by the UK's international treaty obligation under the Convention.
- iii) The prospect that the UK may leave, or be forced out of, the ECHR if plans supported by some Conservatives are implemented, depriving our citizens of the protection of the Convention and the Strasbourg Court and destroying the UK's capacity to lead on human rights internationally.
- iv) The threat to the peace and stability of Northern Ireland posed by the potential repeal of the Human Rights Act, which implemented a key element of the Good Friday Agreement 1998 to incorporate the ECHR into Northern Ireland law.
- v) Proposals included in the Queen's Speech, which are similar to those in the Communications Data Bill, and which would lead to the bulk collection of information by internet service providers.
- vi) The Conservatives' opposition to recommendations in the report by David Anderson QC for more accountable security services, including judicial approval for requests to intercept communications.

Conference resolves to:

- A. Champion human rights and the UK's membership of the ECHR.
- B. Challenge misleading accounts of the effects of the ECHR and the Human Rights Act.
- C. Retain the Human Rights Act unless it is replaced with a Bill of Rights which incorporates and builds on those rights set out in the ECHR along with the critical mechanisms of the Human Rights Act which relate to public authorities, legislation and courts in the UK and oppose any attempts by Conservatives to introduce a British Bill of Rights which does not achieve this.
- D. Oppose measures called for by the Conservatives, such as the bulk collection of data by internet service providers, which would lead to a disproportionate level of surveillance of members of the public.

Conference also calls for:

- 1. A Digital Bill of Rights, to define and enshrine the digital rights of the citizen, including:
 - a) The principle that everyone has the right to control their own data.
 - b) The right to use strong encryption to protect privacy and security.
 - c) The principle that public bodies should only be able to invade an individual's privacy where there is reasonable suspicion of criminal activity.
- 2. A new Freedoms Act, to protect citizens from excessive state power, including:
 - a) Measures to protect free speech and the right to cause offence.
 - b) Measures to prevent heavy handed policing with tighter regulation of 'kettling'.
 - c) Tighter rules on the use of CCTV and facial images.
- 3. The Government to demonstrate its commitment to human rights by ratifying,

acceding to and incorporating into domestic law all outstanding protocols of the European Court of Human Rights, including but not limited to:

- (i) Protocol 1, Article 2 (Right to education).
- (ii) Protocol 4 (Right of free movement).
- (iii) Protocol 7 (Rights of those accused of a crime).
- (iv) Protocol 12 (Right of non-discrimination).

Applicability: Federal

Background Briefing

This motion reaffirmed and updated policy on human rights most recently set out in the General Election Manifesto, Stronger Economy. Fairer Society. Opportunity for Everyone (2015), policy motion A Digital Bill of Rights (2014), policy paper 117, Power to the People (2014), and policy motion Human Rights (2013).

Drafting Amendments: *The Federal Conference Committee accepted drafting amendments to the motion that in B after 'ECHR' inserted 'and the Human Rights Act', and in C after 'ECHR' inserted 'along with the critical mechanisms of the Human Rights Act which relate to public authorities, legislation and courts in the UK'.*

Amendments: *Conference voted to accept one amendment.*

This amendment added 3.

A separate vote was held on item b) of Amendment One, which would have created a statutory obligation for Government action in the event of the Convention being violated. Conference voted to delete these words.

Keep the Social Care Cap and Fund Our Care System Properly

Conference notes:

- a) The role played by Liberal Democrats in establishing the Dilnot Commission, legislating for its introduction, and the work carried out by Liberal Democrats to try and secure a cross party agreement on long term funding of social care.
- b) That the Conservative Party was elected to Government with a clear and unambiguous promise in their manifesto to cap care costs from 2016 onwards.
- c) That George Osborne's emergency budget in July 2015 provided no extra funding for social care.
- d) That the Dilnot Commission was established to identify a practical solution to the question of how the burden of catastrophic care costs is shared between the State and the individual, it was never intended to resolve the overall funding of the system.
- e) That social care has suffered from chronic underfunding and unlike the NHS has not enjoyed any protection. An underfunded social care system simply increases costs in the NHS.

Conference condemns the recent government decision to shelve plans for a cap on care costs, (in effect abandoning the care cap), with an estimated £100m of public money spent on preparation set to be wasted and uncertainty for the future of those who will be needing these care services.

Conference therefore calls on:

- 1. The government to ensure that social care is sustainably funded to ensure that people receive the right care in the right place at the right time and that no one faces catastrophic care costs.
- 2. The government to cancel the increase in the allowance threshold for inheritance tax and use the saving to contribute to these reforms.
- 3. All Liberal Democrats to campaign on this issue in their local areas.

Applicability: England only

Background Briefing

This motion updated policy on social care funding, building on existing policy as set out in the General Election Manifesto Stronger Economy. Fairer Society. Opportunity for Everyone (2015), policy paper 119, Protecting Public Services and Making Them Work for You (2014), and policy paper 122, Age Ready Britain (2014).

No-one Should be Enslaved by Poverty

Conference notes:

- i) The Liberal Democrat role in Coalition in preventing the Conservatives from making drastic cuts to social security, including disability benefits.
- ii) The Conservative Government's announcement of a £12 billion cut to social security spending, including measures set out in the July Budget to:
 - a) Freeze working age benefits, including tax credits and the Local Housing Allowance, in cash terms for four years.
 - b) Cut Employment and Support Allowance for sick and disabled people in the Work Related Activity Group by 30% for new claimants.
 - c) End Housing Benefit for those under 25, making it harder for young people to move to new areas in search of a job.
 - d) Change tax credits and Universal Credit by increasing the 'taper' rate and decreasing the amount families can earn before payments start to be reduced, thereby reducing the benefit of being in work and particularly affecting families with children.
 - e) Restrict Child Tax Credit to a maximum of two children for new claimants.
 - f) Reduce the annual household benefit cap to £23,000 per family in London and £20,000 per family for the rest of the UK.
- iii) The decision of the Labour Party to abstain rather than vote against the £12bn cuts.
- iv) That the Home Secretary reintroduced cuts to the rate of support for children of asylum seekers by varying amounts, up to £23 per child, to take effect on August 10th; these cuts would have been brought in at the end of the last parliament but for Liberal Democrat intervention.
- vi) That the Institute for Fiscal Studies has said that the benefit cuts in the Budget will hit 13 million families, who will each lose at least £260 each year by the end of the Parliament.
- vii) That the Universal Credit programme is a good liberal idea that is being poorly implemented by Conservative Ministers.
- viii) The "Five Giant Evils" (squalor, ignorance, want, idleness, and disease) identified by Beveridge in the last century are rearing their heads again in this century, as evidenced by overcrowded rented housing, growing dependence on foodbanks, and unacceptable health inequalities.
- ix) The findings of the World Health Organisation's Commission on Social Determinants of Health that based on an assessment of global health data, generous universal social protection systems are associated with better population health, including lower excess mortality among the old and lower mortality levels among socially disadvantaged groups.

- x) The findings of a 2014 report by the Poverty and Social Exclusion project which showed that in the UK 18 million people are unable to afford adequate housing and four million are not properly fed.
- xi) That the economic cost to the UK of child poverty alone is estimated as being £29 billion a year by the Child Poverty Action Group.
- xii) That the last comprehensive Liberal Democrat policy paper on welfare was published in 1992.

Conference believes:

- A. No one should be enslaved by poverty or be left without food, shelter and clothing.
- B. Everyone should be entitled to a minimum standard of living, sufficient to allow participation in society, according to their needs rather than on the basis of who is deemed to be 'deserving' or not.
- C. It is a fundamental duty and responsibility of a civilised society to provide a social safety net for all those in need and those who are vulnerable.
- D. The Government's cuts to the welfare budget are motivated by ideology rather than necessity or rationality and will mean that the UK will fail in its responsibilities as a civilised society.
- E. It is morally and economically unjustifiable to make cuts to support for the most vulnerable while protecting universal benefits for the wealthiest pensioners, such as the winter fuel allowance.
- F. Liberal Democrats should campaign against cruel and unnecessary cuts which affect the most vulnerable.
- G. Liberal Democrats should challenge the Conservative Government over failures in Universal Credit's implementation, whereby individuals are left destitute
- H. Liberal Democrats should oppose the proposed £12 billion of cuts to working age benefits, tax credits and sickness and disability benefits noting that following the Welfare Reform Act 2012 the welfare budget has already had to take significant cuts amounting to £22 billion a year.
- I. Liberal Democrats should develop further policy on social security, in particular recognising the importance of ensuring that all systems of social protection, advice and support, including employability and skills development, can work together nationally and locally to provide integrated and holistic services which address the real needs.
- J. That all children living in the UK have the right to adequate financial support, regardless of the status of their parents

Conference further calls for reform of the welfare system to:

- 1. Prioritise support for the most vulnerable over the wealthy and aim to ensure a minimum standard of living for all UK citizens.
- 2. End the practice of higher rate taxpayers receiving pensioner benefits such as the winter fuel allowance.
- 3. Focus on enabling people to participate in society and achieve their potential.
- 4. Provide adequate support for those living with disability or long-term health problems.

Applicability: Federal

Background Briefing

This motion reaffirmed and updated policy on social security. It built on existing policy as set out in the General Election Manifesto, Stronger Economy. Fairer Society. Opportunity for Everyone (2015), and policy motions Reforming the Welfare System (2014) and Food Poverty (2014).

Drafting Amendments: *The Federal Conference Committee accepted a drafting amendment which inserted item iii).*

Amendments: *Conference voted to accept one amendment.*

This amendment inserted items IV and J.

Protecting the BBC

Conference notes that:

- a) Creative industries are now worth £77bn to the UK economy, being the fastest-growing sector over the last five years.
- b) The BBC forms a crucial part of the creative industries in the UK, developing and delivering content that informs, educates and entertains.
- c) BBC research found 96% of people use the BBC every week, spending an average of 18.5 hours watching, listening or online.
- d) There is growing debate around the existence of the licence fee funding model, with the recent Government consultation raising possibilities of a subscription-based model to replace the licence fee.

Conference notes with concern:

- i) The recent Conservative budget placing responsibility for covering the costs of licence fees for over - 75s on the BBC, at an estimated cost of £725m, effectively making the BBC the vehicle to deliver elements of the welfare state.
- ii) That the current Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport has previously attacked the licence fee as 'worse than a poll tax.'
- iii) That the advisory board selected to provide expert advice to the Secretary of State on the future of the BBC has been handpicked by the Secretary of State himself, with no recognition of the Nolan principles of accountability and openness.
- iv) The continued ideological attack on the BBC by members of the Conservative Party, linking attacks on BBC election coverage to the renewal of the BBC's charter.

Conference believes:

- A. Public service broadcasting plays a vital role in entertaining, educating and informing, not least through the provision of independent, objective and accurate news and a wide range of opinion.
- B. The role the BBC has played as the leading public service broadcaster, with its trusted status, its pioneering position in developing new technologies and programming formats, acting as the 'university' of broadcasting, as well as promoting Britain around the world.
- C. It is inappropriate for the Government to force the BBC to act as a vehicle to deliver statutory elements of the welfare state, effectively making the BBC a branch office of the DWP.
- D. The existence of the BBC is beneficial to the creative industries across the UK, especially in areas such as Bristol, Cardiff and Manchester, where BBC investment has helped to create jobs and deliver economic growth.

- E. A strong, independent BBC that can continue to deliver world class programming that educates, informs and entertains is vital to the development of British creative industries.
- F. Any decisions about the future of the BBC, including any changes to the funding model, must be taken in full consultation with licence fee payers.

Conference calls on the Government to:

1. Reverse their decision requiring the BBC to fund licence fees for over 75s.
2. Publish the details of the appointment process for the advisory board, in order to give licence fee payers confidence in the process.
3. Publish a clear and coherent remit for the work of the advisory board, specifically detailing their accountability to the general public and the criteria on which they will be making their recommendations.
4. Ensure the public are given every possible opportunity to contribute to the debate and consultation around the BBC's future.
5. Maintain stable and secure funding through the continuation of the licence fee.

Applicability: Federal

Background Briefing

This motion updated policy on the BBC. It built on existing policy as set out in the General Election Manifesto, Stronger Economy. Fairer Society. Opportunity for Everyone (2015), and in policy motion A Strong, Independent, Well-Financed BBC (2004).

Amendments: Conference voted to remove the words 'and restrict future increases in the licence fee to no more than inflation' in 5.

Public Health Service

Conference notes:

- a) The importance of a properly funded public health service in connecting and linking up an area's local services to ensure healthier outcomes including:
 - i) Education programmes to address issues like smoking, obesity and teenage pregnancy and tackling sexually transmitted diseases.
 - ii) Promotion of healthier lifestyles and exercise.
- b) The work undertaken by Liberal Democrats in the Coalition Government to ensure that responsibility for public health returned to local authorities – which also gave local councillors a lead role on public health and wellbeing in their communities.
- c) That public health work can stop people from becoming ill in the first place; recent research from the Kings Fund and the Local Government Association shows just how valuable timely public health interventions can be – for instance:
 - i) For every £1 spent on smoking prevention programmes in schools, £15 can be saved in NHS treatment later in life.
 - ii) For every £1 spent on developing supportive networks for people with drug and alcohol addictions returns £5 to the public sector in reduced health care, social care and criminal justice costs.
- d) The importance of continuing this work, for example to achieve further cuts to air pollution.
- e) That one of the first acts of the Conservative Government was to slash £200 million from public health budgets as an immediate 'in-year' cut, meaning a permanent reduction in funding.

Conference calls on Liberal Democrats to:

1. Launch a campaign to oppose the Conservative Government's cuts to public health budgets.
2. As part of a wide-ranging review of party policy, work with local authorities, service providers and local communities to understand better the level of ongoing funding that would be needed to deliver the maximum net savings to the future NHS budget together with the associated quality of life benefits.
3. Commit to work towards the goal of providing this level of funding for public health work as part of an integrated and devolved public health budget.
4. Highlight the successes of local authorities and partner organisations in improving public health outcomes.
5. Press for a secure funding basis for population studies and intervention trials into public health issues whether their importance is local, national or international.

Applicability: England only

Background Briefing

This motion reaffirmed and updated existing policy on public health as set out in the General Election Manifesto, Stronger Economy. Fairer Society. Opportunity for Everyone (2015) and in policy paper 119, Protecting Public Services and Making Them Work for You (2014).

Amendments: *Conference voted to accept one amendment.*

This amendment added 5.

Reducing Tax on Tourism

Conference notes:

- a) The campaign to cut VAT on tourist accommodation and attractions from 20% to 5% which is supported by the British Hospitality Association; the British Association of Leisure parks, Piers and Attractions; Merlin Entertainments Group; Butlins and many others.
- b) That the UK Government can set VAT at either 20% or 5% under EU regulations.
- c) That the UK is the seventh largest international tourism destination, ranked by visitor expenditure and numbers.
- d) In 2013, tourism accounted for 9% of UK GDP (£127 billion) and more than 3.1 million jobs, making tourism the UK's sixth largest export-earner.
- e) The World Economic Forum places Britain in 140th place for price competitiveness for tourism, out of 141 countries.
- f) 44% of people employed in the sector are less than 30 years old.
- g) The UK has the second highest rate of VAT on hotel accommodation in the EU.
- h) 25 of 28 EU member states have lowered VAT on tourist accommodation and attractions.
- i) In 2009, France cut VAT on meals in restaurants from 19.6% to 5.5%, creating 28,200 jobs and saving 15,000 businesses.
- j) Ireland's cut in VAT on tourism from 13% to 9% "appears to have met its original aims of driving employment and stimulating activity in the sector, at a lower cost than originally estimated" according to a Failte Ireland/Deloitte analysis.
- k) A 15% cut in tourism VAT could become revenue-neutral and result in an increased tax take of £3.9 billion over 10 years, delivering a £4 billion boost per year to the gross domestic product, according to research by Nevin Associates.

Conference believes that:

1. The UK should take advantage of EU dispensation for a lower VAT rate on tourism supplies, as 25 other EU member states already do, in order to reduce the burden on the tourism industry, enable growth, and better compete with the rest of the EU.
2. The tourism industry was disproportionately affected by the recession, with six out of eight UK regions outside of London seeing a reduction in domestic visitor numbers in 2013.
3. Areas affected by flooding have seen their tourism industry negatively impacted.
4. Supporting tourism across the UK will help rebalance the economy and generate investment and regeneration in regions that rely heavily on tourism.
5. Supporting the sector could generate 80,000 new jobs over three years and 120,000 over ten years, according to research by Nevin Associates, particularly for young people and those with low skills.
6. A VAT cut would send a strong message that Britain is open for business and open to tourists.

Conference therefore calls for VAT on Visitor Accommodation and Attractions to be reduced from 20% to 5%.

Applicability: Federal

Background Briefing

This motion created new policy regarding the Tourism VAT rate. Tourism policy in general was previously addressed by policy motion Valuing Tourism and Tourists (2004).

Amendments: *An amendment designed to reduce taxation for smaller hotels and tourist attractions paid for by levying a modest per night charge on the largest hotels and chains was defeated.*

Separate votes: *A separate vote to prevent attractions (as opposed to visitor accommodation) from having their VAT reduced to 5% was defeated.*

Scrapping Trident

Conference notes that the go-ahead for building Successor submarines for the Trident system is scheduled to be decided upon in 2016.

Conference rejects the projected spending of £100 billion on the system over its lifetime, believing the money could be better spent.

In line with our existing policy as set out in policy paper 112, *Defending the Future – UK Defence in the 21st century (2013)*, and our recent General Election Manifesto, conference resolves to oppose like-for-like replacement of the Trident system as proposed by the Conservative government.

Conference believes that the ‘Maingate’ decision to proceed with Trident replacement is such a fundamental question affecting the UK’s national interest that it should be subject to a binding vote in Parliament and not simply a government decision; and calls on Liberal Democrat Parliamentarians to vote against any such proposal should it come before Parliament.

Conference further calls on the Federal Policy Committee to:

1. Commission a Policy Working Group to develop policy on the future of Britain’s nuclear deterrent, if any, following a full consultation within the party.
2. Include within the remit of the working group consideration of:
 - a) A full assessment of potential strategic threats to the UK.
 - b) Prospects for the promotion of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament and the UK’s potential role in these efforts.
 - c) The implications of a non-nuclear defence posture for the UK on conventional defence capabilities and the UK’s place in the world, including its contribution to the security of Europe through NATO.
 - d) The scope for and implications of a scaled-down nuclear deterrent.
 - e) Independent costings of options.
1. Bring a policy paper back for debate at Conference within 18 months, including if necessary options for conference to decide.

Applicability: Federal

Background Briefing

This motion as amended called for a review of Britain’s nuclear capability. It reaffirmed existing policy against renewing Trident on a like-for-like basis as set out in the General Election manifesto, Stronger Economy. Fairer Society. Opportunity for Everyone (2015), and in policy paper 112, Defending the Future – UK Defence in the 21st Century (2013).

Amendments: *Conference voted to accept one amendment and to reject one amendment.*

The accepted amendment removed from the original motion lines which read “Conference believes that British possession of nuclear weapons is inappropriate and unhelpful to today’s needs.” and “Conference therefore calls for the plans to renew the Trident system to be scrapped, and for the earliest decommissioning of the existing Trident forces.”. It inserted the section of the passed motion beginning “In line with our existing policy...” and ending with section 3 “...including if necessary options for conference to decide.”

The rejected amendment called for the deletion of “Conference believes that British possession of nuclear weapons is inappropriate and unhelpful to today’s needs.”, and for the replacement of “earliest decommissioning of the existing Trident forces” with “government to urgently pursue international agreements to halt nuclear arms proliferation and the reduction in the stocks of nuclear weapons held around the globe with the overall objective of a comprehensive ban on the possession of nuclear weapons.”

Securing a Global Treaty on Climate Change

Conference notes that:

- a) The 21st Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change is scheduled to take place in Paris from 30 November to 11 December 2015.
- b) This will be a crucial conference, as it needs to achieve a new international agreement on the climate, applicable to all countries, with the aim of keeping global warming within 2°C above pre-industrial levels.

Conference applauds the achievements of Liberal Democrats in government from 2010 to 2015 in maintaining momentum towards a new global treaty on climate change, working constructively with other EU member states for more ambitious action on green growth and making progress towards decarbonising the UK economy.

Conference calls on the Government to:

1. Play a leading political and diplomatic role as part of the EU negotiating effort to secure agreement on a fair, effective and legally binding new global climate treaty at the conference, including commitments by all countries to reduce emissions, with the richer countries taking the lead, supported by a well-financed Green Climate Fund to assist poorer countries to tackle and adapt to climate change.
2. Cooperate with other European countries to address environmental threats and tackle climate change by securing a formal agreement to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 50% by 2030 (from 1990 levels), as part of a global agreement, reforming the EU Emissions Trading System and developing the EU Energy Union.
3. Continue pressing for the greater use of EU funds to support innovative low-carbon investments.
4. Ensure that the UK meets its own targets to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and plays a leadership role within Europe and internationally on efforts to combat climate change.
5. Pursue additional actions outside the UN climate talks, including EU and international initiatives to reduce hydrofluorocarbons and other 'short-lived climate forcers'.
6. Ensure that UK and EU development aid, free trade and investment agreements support environmental goals and sustainable investment, including maintaining the UK's International Climate Fund and supporting direct bilateral programmes with developing countries on climate change.

Conference condemns the government for its irresponsible decisions to:

- I. end support for onshore wind power and sharply reduce support for other renewable technologies, including solar PV and anaerobic digestion;
- II. end renewable energy's exemption from the Climate Change Levy;
- III. reduce the incentives to purchase low-emission cars, through reforms to vehicle excise duty;
- IV. privatise the Green Investment Bank; and
- V. scrap the Green Deal and weaken the zero carbon homes standard;

all of which undermine the UK's ability to meet its climate and renewables targets while at the same time increasing local air pollution, losing jobs and investment and harming the UK's international competitiveness.

Applicability: Federal

Background Briefing

This motion updated policy on climate change, looking forward to the upcoming UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in Paris. It built on existing policy as set out in the General Election Manifesto, Stronger Economy. Fairer Society. Opportunity for Everyone. (2015), and policy motion International Cooperation on the Environment (2012).

Amendments: *Conference voted to accept one amendment.*

This amendment removed the original section condemning the government's decision on onshore wind subsidies and replaced it with an elongated condemnation section including clauses I – V.

Term-Time Family Holiday Rules

Conference notes:

- i) The existing regulation on term-time family holiday, which only permits term-time holiday in exceptional circumstances at the discretion of the head teacher, and the prohibitive restrictions this places on activities beneficial to children and family life.
- ii) The previous regulation which gave school heads discretion to grant up to ten days authorised term-time leave per year.
- iii) That Department for Education evidence shows no correlation between decreased attainment and authorised leave for family holiday, study leave or religious observance.
- iv) The distortion the current regulation places on the tourism industry, resulting in inflated prices, lost income and small business closures.

Conference is concerned that:

- a) Current rules are socially divisive, placing holidays out of reach of low income families, and fail to treat equally families of children within and outside the state education system.
- b) Many employees have no choice when to take their holiday.
- c) These restrictions have inflicted upset and disadvantage upon many families, particularly those with disabilities and who are on lower incomes.
- d) A reversal of the changes has been called for by the Local Government Association and the National Union of Teachers.

Conference believes:

- 1. That education for all children is important.
- 2. In the fundamental liberal principle of individual choice alongside the immeasurable benefit of family time on the happiness and wellbeing of children.
- 3. That the principle of equality of opportunity for all children is of vital importance.
- 4. That policy should be based on firm evidence, stakeholder input and an understanding of impact.

Conference therefore calls for the amendment to term-time family holiday rules to be reversed, so that school head teachers can have the discretion to grant up to ten days absence a year in special circumstances.

Applicability: England only

Background Briefing

This motion created new policy on changes to rules around term-time holiday for school children. It added to education policy in the General Election Manifesto, Stronger Economy. Fairer Society. Opportunity for Everyone (2015) and in policy paper 119, Protecting Public Services (2014).

Transgender and Intersex Health Charter

Conference notes with concern that:

- A. The transgender and intersex communities are too often marginalised, with little or no emphasis on their needs from government or third sector organisations; transgender and intersex individuals experience similar levels and types of discrimination within society, including but not limited to hate crime, health discrimination, and difficulty obtaining documents in the correct gender.
- B. Legislation concerning the transgender population often does not fully advance – and sometimes actively hinders – transgender equality.
- C. Transgender and intersex people are at a higher risk of mental health issues and suicidal ideation than the general population and the rest of the LGBT+ population, especially among BME transgender and intersex people.

Conference welcomes the party's strong record of promoting transgender and intersex equality at all levels of politics. Conference also welcomes the commitment made in the 2015 General Election Manifesto, *Stronger Economy. Fairer Society. Opportunity for Everyone* to allocate £8 billion per year of additional funding to the NHS.

Conference is also concerned that:

- I. Gender identity clinics are chronically underfunded and waiting times for each step of the gender transition process are often in excess of the statutory eighteen-week limit by a factor of three or more.
- II. Funding problems and waiting lists often force transgender people to seek private medical treatment at great personal expense, from obtaining hormone replacement therapy to updating documentation and obtaining second opinions for treatment.
- III. The lack of a gender identity clinic in Wales forces transgender patients to travel to London for their appointments at personal cost in both time and money.
- IV. The right of transgender people – and especially transgender children – to receive adequate necessary medical care is increasingly under threat from multiple fronts.
- V. The statutory NHS scrutiny body Healthwatch has described the treatment of transgender people in the NHS as that of “second-class citizens”.
- VI. Several gender identity clinics refuse to treat intersex patients or patients who do not fully identify as either male or female.
- VII. There are no explicit protections for transgender refugees seeking asylum due to fear of persecution in their home country.
- VIII. Current practices in data collection make it difficult for a transgender person to have their gender recorded accurately under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998, and that, without a gender recognition certificate, their transgender status is not guaranteed to be treated as protected or sensitive data.
- IX. There are provisions in the Equality Act 2010 which mean that jobs and services cannot be open to only transgender people, but can be open to only cisgender people; this can prevent autonomous organising for transgender rights.
- X. Very few people are fairly compensated for transgender or intersex activism, leading activists to sacrifice great amounts of their own time and money to ensure their voices can be heard.
- XI. Depictions of transgender people, both in fiction and political discourse, invariably resort to stereotypes and innuendo at best, and are outright voyeuristic and bigoted

at worst, and almost entirely are a result of cisgender people projecting what they believe to be a transgender person's experience.

Conference believes that:

- i) Variations in sex and gender, however they manifest, are a simple fact of human physiology and psychology, and neither the state nor society should pass judgement on people who deviate from what is considered the norm.
- ii) It is irresponsible at best and malicious at worst, to refuse marginalised people such as the transgender community the right to organise or access sheltered accommodation.
- iii) Every person has a right to receive prompt medical care that is free at the point of service.
- iv) No person, and especially no child, should be made to undergo unnecessary medical treatments without their informed consent.
- v) We have a responsibility as liberals to represent and liberate the most marginalised people in society.

Conference calls for:

- 1. The funding that NHS England has requested to be provided to ensure compliance with each person's needs and with waiting time standards in all aspects of the gender healthcare service.
- 2. The NHS to guarantee in their gender dysphoria protocols, in line with the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH) Standards of Care:
 - a) The right of transgender and gender-variant children to receive puberty-blocking medications until they are eligible for hormone replacement therapy.
 - b) The right of genderqueer, non-binary, and intersex people to access gender identity and reassignment services without discrimination based on their identity.
- 3. An independent inquiry into widespread and systemic abuse of transgender people within the health service.
- 4. Protections on gender reassignment in equality law to be expanded to also explicitly cover gender identity and expression, and all legal protections on the basis of sexual orientation to be extended to include gender identity and intersex status where appropriate.
- 5. Provisions in the Equality Act 2010 that legalise discrimination against transgender people and prevent autonomous organising to be reversed.
- 6. A streamlined simplification of the Gender Recognition Act 2004 to allow individuals to change their legal gender at will.
- 7. The phased removal of gender markers in documentation unless it is absolutely necessary, and the introduction of an 'X' gender option and 'Mx.' title option on the remainder.

8. Changes to government-issued documentation on the basis of gender reassignment to be provided free of charge.
9. The Equalities and Human Rights Commission to develop standards of best practice in which equality and diversity monitoring forms request transgender status separate from gender and sexual orientation, with options for 'prefer not to say' and 'other (please specify)' for each question.
10. Transgender status of any kind to be explicitly designated as 'sensitive personal data' under the Data Protection Act 1998 and 'protected information' under the Gender Recognition Act 2004.
11. The practice of unnecessary surgery on children for the purpose of resolving intersex variations of primary sex characteristics to be phased out, and for the Royal College of Surgeons to develop standards on that basis.
12. More paid roles to help increase transgender and intersex representation, especially in third sector organisations working with LGBT+ or young people.
13. The government to recognise and observe Bisexual Visibility Day (23 September), Intersex Awareness Day (26 October) and Transgender Day of Remembrance (20 November).
14. The party to continue to make the case for transgender and intersex equality, especially through challenging transphobia in political discourse and encouraging positive depictions in the media.

Conference also supports the Welsh Liberal Democrats in campaigning to establish a gender identity clinic in Wales.

Applicability: England only, except 4-10 and 13-14 which are Federal.

Background Briefing

This motion developed policy on the rights of transgender and intersex individuals. It built on existing policy as set out in the General Election Manifesto, Stronger Economy. Fairer Society. Opportunity for Everyone (2015), and in policy paper 120, Expanding Opportunity, Unlocking Potential (2014).

Urgent Action on Air Quality and Health

Conference notes that:

- A. Poor air quality is a significant health problem – after smoking, estimates suggest it is Britain's second biggest public health challenge, with particulates responsible for the equivalent of 29,000 deaths every year and the most recent study published by King's College, London on 15th July, which incorporates nitrogen dioxide, revises that national figure to 80,000.
- B. Air pollution has damaging effects on the quality of life of citizens and severely impacts on vulnerable groups such as children, the elderly and those with heart problems or asthma.
- C. Air pollution also affects natural ecosystems causing acidification and eutrophication which poses a threat to biodiversity.
- D. Across the UK, EU air pollution limits are being exceeded in cities including London, Glasgow and Leeds and following the adverse judgment by the UK's Supreme Court, the European Court of Justice has recently ordered the UK Government to submit a viable plan for compliance with the EU Air Quality Directive by the end of this year.
- E. As a large proportion of the air pollution in the UK comes from abroad, including 40% of particulate matter, local measures to tackle air pollution must be combined with action at the European and global level.
- F. At the European level there are ongoing negotiations to introduce cleaner European standards (Euro 6) for vehicle emissions of nitrogen oxides and particulate matter.
- G. New binding EU national limits are currently being negotiated to reduce key pollutants including sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, methane, volatile organic compounds and ammonia through the revision of the National Emission Ceiling directive, which should ensure EU governments take action across the board to tackle air pollution, making it easier for local authorities to coordinate efforts and improve air quality across the country.
- H. Research suggests that the current diesel test regime underestimates emissions by as much as ten times.

Conference welcomes the recent EU decision to introduce 'real-world' emissions testing for diesel vehicles.

Conference reaffirms the Party's recent manifesto commitments to promote cleaner air, in particular:

- I. A National Air Quality Plan including:
 - a) A legal requirement targeted at the most polluted towns and cities, to create Low Emission Zones.
 - b) New incentives for local schemes that cut transport-related pollution, and encourage walking and cycling.
 - c) A review of the MOT process, to see whether changes could be introduced to cut emissions from existing vehicles.
- II. Reforms to Vehicle Excise Duty to drive continuous reductions in greenhouse gas and other pollutants from the UK car fleet, including introducing separate banding for new diesel cars.

- III. Implementation of the recommendations of the *Get Britain Cycling* report, allowing greater investment in cycling including bike lanes, high-volume secure bike parking, and road safety measures to keep cyclists safe.

Conference further calls for:

1. A nationwide advertising and promotion campaign to raise public awareness of these air pollutants' effects on health and the quality of life and how to mitigate them.
2. A diesel engine scrappage scheme for cars and taxis that are not up to Euro 4 standard.
3. A requirement for local authorities to provide adequate numbers of on-street charge points for electric cars.
4. A ban on any diesel-powered vehicle (including trains) keeping engines running while parked or at a terminus.
5. A ban on Heavy Goods Vehicle movement in city centres in rush hours.
6. Action to discourage the use of diesel transport refrigeration units and to encourage their replacement with units based on air engines
7. More support for the introduction of electric buses and for further incentives to encourage rapid take-up of Ultra-Low Emission Vehicles by drivers, including privileged access for the least polluting vehicles to town centres, toll roads and airports
8. Ambitious EU limits to reduce air pollution across Europe through the revision of the National Emissions Ceiling Directive, including for ammonia and methane.
9. Research into how best to tackle airborne particulates from vehicle tyres and brake pads, and from the road surface itself, for example regenerative braking systems.
10. Encouragement for the planting of large trees in urban areas which have, in many studies, been shown to cut air pollution significantly.

Applicability: Federal, except I b), III, 5, 7, and 10 which are England only

Background Briefing

This motion reaffirmed existing policy and created new policy on air pollution. It built on existing policy set out in the General Election Manifesto, Stronger Economy. Fairer Society. Opportunity for Everyone (2015), policy motion Adapting to Climate Change in the UK (2014), and policy paper 109, Green Growth and Green Jobs (2013).

Amendments: *One amendment was accepted.*

This amendment inserted 3, 6, and in 7 inserted everything after 'electric buses'.

A separate vote was held on the section of the motion that proposed deleting 2. 2 was retained.

Winning in Europe

Conference recognises that the creation of the European Union has led to peace, prosperity, democracy and security for the peoples of Europe.

Conference believes that winning a decisive victory for In in the referendum on the UK's membership of the European Union is essential because our position as one of the EU's largest member states gives us:

- a) Greater political and economic influence in the world, both in international fora and in bilateral relations.
- b) Free access to our principal export market – the world's largest single market of over 500 million consumers – together with a major role in shaping its rules, which has enabled the UK to lead the EU to greater openness and reduced protectionism.
- c) The ability to tackle more effectively shared problems, such as climate change, biodiversity including sustainable fishing, and cross-border crime.
- d) A wide range of future opportunities as the EU continues to reform and develop in order to focus on those actions which are most effective if undertaken at the EU level.

Conference calls for a positive and coordinated campaign, with a dual approach in which Liberal Democrats work with and in parallel to members of all parties, businesses, trade unions, civil society groups and others who share the commitment to securing an IN vote, and urges all Liberal Democrats to play an active role in the campaign.

Conference notes that our party has always combined its recognition of the essential role of EU membership with a constant drive to make EU institutions and decision-making more democratic, effective, efficient and transparent, which places us in a strong position within the In campaign to present a clear and convincing case to voters.

Conference hopes that the campaign will achieve much wider public recognition that:

- 2. The EU provides our best hope for building a more peaceful world, constructed on firm foundations of shared democracy, human rights and openness.
- 3. Britain's membership of the EU provides a major incentive for investment in manufacturing industry from non-EU companies, notably in the Process, Engineering and Automotive industries, and that this investment brings thousands of jobs to regions of the UK which have suffered from the loss of traditional heavy industry over the last half century – the loss of such investment would be disastrous for employment and prosperity in those areas.
- 3. The EU continues to reform, intensifying its focus on job creation through sustainable economic growth, boosting trade, and getting rid of unnecessary regulations – an agenda which increasingly reflects British priorities, such as liberalisation of digital services and capital markets union – all of which demands that the UK continue to play a leading role.
- 4. EU research programmes are crucial to the success of British universities and UK science, promoting innovation and competitiveness in the UK economy and laying the foundations for faster advances in medicine, low-carbon energy, new materials, food security and other fields of cutting-edge science; and enabling speedier development into viable products with real commercial potential.
- 5. The EU and our membership provides the UK with the best chance of tackling climate

change and biodiversity loss, while creating green jobs in potentially world-leading industries, especially through pressure for a global deal to reduce carbon emissions and the development of low-carbon and energy-saving technologies.

6. The EU provides significant support for rural economies, the environment and rural communities through programmes such as Leader and support for British agriculture – the level playing field provided by the EU agricultural market is essential for the future of farming and rural areas.
7. EU membership – and the large scale of the EU single market – gives the UK a voice in setting environmental, consumer safety, animal welfare and other standards which govern European trade and are often adopted globally, enabling expanded worldwide trade.
8. EU membership guarantees a wide range of workplace, consumer and citizens' rights, including free movement, employment rights and other protections enjoyed by an estimated two million British citizens living in other EU countries.
9. EU membership enables UK law enforcement agencies to work collaboratively across borders and so respond to the growing threat of organised crime in areas such as human trafficking, drugs and other smuggling, counterfeit products, wildlife trafficking and money laundering.
10. Young people in Britain are increasingly benefitting from the opportunities EU membership gives of academic learning and industrial training in other EU countries, enriching their lives and capacities, and enlarging Europe's great pool of shared knowledge.
11. The UK's participation in the EU's extensive international development programmes and humanitarian assistance budgets represents a recognition of our common humanity, as well as our global inter-dependence.

Conference recognises that the outcome of the EU Referendum will be of immense long-term significance and therefore calls for the Referendum Bill to extend the franchise to include:

- i) All 16 and 17 year olds.
- ii) All EU citizens resident in the UK.
- iii) All UK citizens resident in other EU countries.

Conference wholeheartedly declares its ambition for Britain to fulfil the leading role in our continent which our size, history and strengths offer to us.

Applicability: Federal

Background Briefing

This motion set out policy on the coming referendum on Britain's membership of the European Union. It built on existing policy set out in the General Election Manifesto, Stronger Economy. Fairer Society. Opportunity for Everyone. (2015), in the European Parliamentary Election Manifesto, In Europe, In Work (2014) and in policy paper 113, Prosperous, Stable and Secure (2013).

Drafting Amendments: *The Federal Conference Committee accepted drafting amendments that:*

- *changed references to 'YES' to references to 'In', in line with the alteration of the European Referendum question.*

- *Inserted 2; and*
- *Inserted 6.*

Amendments: *Conference voted to accept two amendments.*

The first amendment inserted 'with a dual approach in which Liberal Democrats work with and in parallel to' into the call for a positive and co-ordinated campaign.

The second amendment extended the section on the Referendum franchise, inserting the section from 'Conference recognises that the outcome...' to 'resident in other EU countries.'

Separate Votes: *Separate votes were held for each of the items i), ii) and iii) as put forward by Amendment 2. Items i), ii), and iii) were all retained.*

Youth Services

Conference notes:

- A. The commitment of the Liberal Democrats when in Government to improve outcomes for children and young people via the pupil premium, free school meals and other measures.
- B. The significantly increased number of apprenticeships for young people.

Conference notes with concern:

- i) The depletion of youth services across the UK, leaving whole areas without youth provision denying many young people, particularly the most vulnerable, access to non-formal education, emotional support, an adequate youth voice in decision-making and our democratic structures and opportunities to develop their talents, social skills and pursue their interests.
- ii) The lack of attention being paid to equality issues in access to youth provision, whether it be LGBT+, BAME, gender issues or socio-economic divides.

Conference believes that:

- a) Youth work has an important role in tackling inequalities, raising aspiration and supporting young people's social and emotional development.
- b) All young people should have access to excellent youth services and qualified youth workers.

Conference calls for:

1. Liberal Democrats to commit to championing out-of-school youth services and for our MPs and education spokespeople in the House of Lords to speak out on these issues at every available opportunity.
2. A commitment to press the Government to help local authorities rebuild and fund youth services including putting the funding of youth services on a statutory footing.
3. The Government to initiate an immediate review of youth services, including a gap analysis in terms of quality, quantity and funding of youth provision across the country, taking account of equality issues.
4. A requirement for youth services to be included in the inspection regime.
5. Investment in workforce development and training so that all young people have access to excellent youth work.

Applicability: England only

Background Briefing

This motion updated policy on youth services. It built on existing policy as set out in the General Election Manifesto, Stronger Economy. Fairer Society. Opportunity for Everyone (2015).

Amendments: *One amendment was accepted.*

This amendment deleted C ("Conference notes... existing Liberal Democrat policy to put youth

services on a statutory footing.”), *and amended 2 to include* ‘including putting the funding of youth services on a statutory footing’.

Membership Subscription

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 remain at £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 2016:

- 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 to apply for each of the first two years of membership.
- 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 2016 the Federal Levy on membership subscriptions shall be 44%.

Applicability: Federal

Amendments: An amendment was passed in 4. (line 18) after 'a special introductory rate of £1' inserting 'to apply for each of the first two years of membership'.

Constitutional Amendments

One Member, One Vote

In 2.7(a): delete '*representatives*' and insert '*members*'.

In 3.2: delete '*but excluding the appointment of representatives to Federal Conference*'.

In 4.1: delete '4.3(b)' and insert '4.3', and delete '6.2 and 6.3'.

Delete Article 4.3(b).

In 4.9: delete '*A Local Party shall not while its rights are suspended be entitled to representation at the Federal Conference.*'

In 5.5(b): delete '*circulating consultation papers to, Federal Conference representatives*' and insert '*making consultation papers available to members*'.

In 5.6: delete '*members of the Federal Conference*' and insert '*party members,*'.

Delete 6.1(a) to 6.1(h) and insert '*party members*'.

Delete Articles 6.2, 6.3, and 6.4.

In 6.5: delete '*and for all members who are not representatives to address other sessions of the Conference*'.

In 6.6: delete '*200 representatives entitled to attend Conference*' and insert '*200 members, in not fewer than 20 local parties*'.

Insert new Articles 6.11, 7.3 and 8.3 to apply to the Federal Conference Committee, Federal Policy Committee and Federal Executive respectively:

The Chair of the [Federal Conference Committee/Federal Policy Committee/Federal Executive] shall, within 14 days of each committee meeting, make available to party members and other Federal Committees a written report on the proceedings of the meeting, including reports from their established sub-committees with delegated responsibility, in a manner deemed practical by the Federal Chief Executive.

In 11.5(i): delete '4.3(a)' and insert '4.3'.

In 12.1: delete '*representatives entitled to attend the Federal Conference*' and insert '*members*'.

In 13.2: after '*two-thirds majority of*' delete '*Conference*' and insert '*members present and voting at the Federal Conference*'.

In 13.8: delete '*for the purpose of Article 6.2*', and after '*exercising the rights of the SAO under Articles 6, 10*' insert '*and 12*'.

Standing Order Amendments

One Member, One Vote

In the Glossary of Terms, delete the terms 'Elected Representative ...' and 'Non-Voting Member ...'.

In the Glossary of Terms, under 'Special Conference' delete '200 conference representatives' and insert '200 members, in not fewer than 20 local parties'.

In the Glossary of Terms, under 'Voting Member': delete all and insert:

A member attending conference who has satisfied the requirements for attendance and has paid the registration fee presently in force for party members as agreed by FCC, and who is not a day visitor [or observer].

In 1.3(b) and 1.3(d): delete '10 conference representatives' and insert '10 party members'.

In 1.3(f): delete 'voting' and insert 'party'.

In 1.4: delete 'conference representatives' and insert 'party members'.

In 1.6: delete 'notified to conference representatives' and insert 'publicised to party members', and after 'newspaper' insert '/magazine and website'.

In 3.1: delete 'conference representative' and insert 'party member'.

In 3.2: after 'must be' delete 'either', and delete 'or included in a ballot to allow conference representatives to determine an order of priority for allocating time'

In 4.5: delete 'representatives attending Conference' and insert 'voting members'.

In 6.2: delete 'If the person who is excluded is a voting member of conference, their local party or SAO shall be contacted immediately and invited to appoint a substitute for the remainder of the conference.'

In 8.5: under 'Who may speak' delete all and insert:

All voting members may speak at a full session of conference. Additionally, the Committee may invite any person to address the conference as a guest. Neither such provision shall prejudice the right of the chair of a session to select speakers.

In 8.7: delete 'and non-voting'.

In 11.2 (heading): delete 'representative' and insert 'voting member'.

In 14.1, both instances: delete 'directly elected by conference' and insert 'directly elected by party members'.

Questions on Reports to Conference

Campaign for Gender Balance

Q1 Submitted by Sir Simon Hughes

Liberal Democrat efforts to increase diversity of gender have clearly not succeeded so far in making sure we have a representative group of parliamentarians in the Commons and in other parts of the party. Will the Chair now bring forward a proposal to next year's autumn conference for the party to allow all women shortlists if constituency parties, regional, or state parties wish this?

Answer by Ros Gordon

It is not enough to get women selected, they must also be elected.

Supplementary

We should allow all women shortlists to be chosen locally. Can we get this on the agenda so that conference can decide on this next year?

Answer by Ros Gordon

It may be too late. Selections are before next conference. We need the right people in the right seats now.

Q2 Submitted by Jane Dodds

Is it possible for the campaign to support the five female candidates in Wales?

Answer by Ros Gordon

Happy to help. Need to know what you need.

Supplementary

We should push the party to support Welsh candidates. Federal Party needs to raise the profile of Welsh candidates.

Answer by Ros Gordon

Congratulations and please write for us in the next newsletter.

Diversity Engagement Group

Q1 Submitted by Sir Simon Hughes

Liberal Democrat efforts to increase diversity of race, ethnicity, and faith have clearly not succeeded so far in making sure we have a representative group of parliamentarians in the Commons and in other parts of the party. Will the Chair now bring forward a proposal to next year's autumn conference for the party to support legislation to allow all BAME short lists if constituency parties, regional, or state parties wish this - initially for a trial period and learning from the experience of the legislation of all female shortlists?

Answer by Sir Andrew Stunell

Quotas will be included in the Governance Review. Four steps in getting more diverse people into Parliament:

- 1) Put yourself forward
- 2) Get shortlisted
- 3) Get selected
- 4) Succeeding

Not much we can do about 4 beyond our normal levels of support for Lib Dem candidates.

Supplementary

Will it be fed into the governance review that all BAME or all female shortlists are supported?

Answer by Sir Andrew Stunell

Proposals in the past have been rejected. The Diversity Engagement Group is not responsible for the specific proposals. Currently there are only white male MPs – this is atrocious. We need to change that.

Federal Conference Committee

Q1 Submitted by Robert Adamson

Why do parts of the Conference Directory and Agenda not follow RNIB and other guidance regarding the need for contrast between text and background colours?

Answer by Andrew Wiseman

Thank you for drawing the issue to our attention. We work with Liberal Democrat Disability Association and there is an access forum on the Sunday of conference. We do provide a Conference Agenda and Directory in a Clear Print and a plain text version.

Q2 Submitted by Alisdair McGregor

- A) How many Local Parties meet the constitutional criteria for Voting Representation at Federal Conference, and how many do not?
- B) How many Local Parties have designated the full complement of their permitted Federal Conference Representatives?
- C) What proportion of the total number of permitted Federal Conference Representatives has been filled?
- D) How many of the designated Federal Conference Representatives have chosen to attend the Bournemouth 2015 Conference?
- E) Do the answers to the previous questions indicate an increase or decrease on earlier Federal Conferences?

Please provide at least a decade of data for this answer. Written answers published in the Conference Daily will be acceptable for these questions.

Answer by Andrew Wiseman

- A) 364 do and 70 do not.
- B) 29% have the full complement of voting reps
- C) 66%
- D) Cannot give the number who attended. Number of registered attendees is 1,281.
- E) Would be disproportionately difficult due to various different systems to find historic data on this issue.

All data can be found can be found in written report on the LD website.

Around 100 local parties have no members attending year on year. 68 local parties have no-one attending last year.

Supplementary

Request for conference to continue to monitor these statistics in future.

Answer by Andrew Wiseman

This will be done.

Federal Executive

Q1 Submitted by Mark Pack

The motion on one-member one-vote passed last autumn set out several next steps. Some of these are covered by the constitutional and standing order amendments tabled for this conference. What progress has been made on the other points set out in the motion as passed (reforming confidentiality rules for committees, allowing committee votes to be recorded and amending election regulations)?

Answer by Sal Brinton

We have been putting reports on the website, letting members know where to find it. I'm in communication with Chairs of other committees. It forms part of the governance review. But it is difficult for some committees, e.g. FCC have to vote a lot of times, so it could be complex for some committees.

Q2 Submitted by Andrew Hudson

Why was 'Reports to Conference' posted on the Party website in a format that was difficult to access and download unlike the other documents?

Answer by Sal Brinton

We do have an accessible version now uploaded. Apologies. Result of change of President.

Supplementary

When I tried to download the report it crashed the computer. Is that satisfactory?

Answer by Sal Brinton

No it is not.

Q3 Submitted by Robert Adamson

Why doesn't the FE, directly or through its committees, ensure that our publications and website follow accessibility guidelines issued by the RNIB & others regarding, for example, the need for adequate contrast between text and background for both print and electronic communications?

Answer by Sal Brinton

They are taken into account and staff make sure they are as accessible as possible. Please get in touch with the relevant department in HQ as soon as possible if there are issues.

Q4 Submitted by Alisdair McGregor

Could the Federal Executive provide a progress report and a timescale for completion & publication of its responsibilities under clause 20 of the Federal Party Leadership Election Regulations?

Answer by Sal Brinton

FE is instructed by the party after every leadership election to review process. We come back in spring then formal answer in autumn.

Supplementary

The regulation requires you to complete within 6 months. Scale and likelihood of entryism for purposes of leadership election?

Answer by Sal Brinton

We will meet the required deadline. I didn't see anywhere near as much entryism as a certain other party's election. I saw people joining us to support the party, rather than one particular candidate.

Q5 Submitted by Jacquie Bell

Ad Lib is now an all member quarterly magazine. Why were monthly subscribers only advised of changes if they phoned HQ to ask why expected issues had not been received?

Answer by Sal Brinton

We wrote by post. No subscribers replied so the changes were made. Without further information on this I cannot say much more.

Supplementary

I phoned HQ plus posted on Facebook. It was only in 2015 that standard letter came out, but it was already not appearing in 2014.

Answer by Sal Brinton

Sorry because I only became president in January I wasn't aware of it. I believe they were trying to find the right balance for AdLib. If it took some time I apologise.

Q6 Submitted by Sarah Brown

Material produced by Liberal Democrats HQ has consistently included errors such as referring to delivering "Equal Marriage" rather than "Same Sex Marriage", and writing "homophobia" when "homo, bi and transphobia" was meant. These errors were pointed out by LGBT+ LibDems, as it rendered all centrally-produced campaign material useless for LGBT campaigning. LGBT+ LibDems were told the incorrect language would continue to be used. Could the FE explain why these terms are used despite the objections of LGBT+ LibDems?

Answer by Sal Brinton

Zoe is right to raise this. I have asked that the message go back particularly to staff at HQ. Use of "equal marriage" particularly bugs me. I will continue to make sure we get it right. Please let me know if this continues.

Supplementary

Equal marriage phrase was used in the (conference) rally. Very frustrating. We don't have an answer when out campaigning and people point out where we've got it wrong.

Answer by Sal Brinton

Absolutely right where literature is produced by staff or senior people we need to get this right. Although difficult to control language from speakers at conference.

Federal Finance and Administration Committee**Q1 Submitted by Peter Tyzack**

What arrangements can be made to enable participants in Policy Working Groups to claim for reasonable travel expenses to attend London based meetings?

My concern is that if participation is limited to just those who can afford the cost of travel then there will be a skew to policy outcomes as being either a London-centric view or a well-heeled view. Some of our policy development certainly needs the input of those on lower incomes and those who may live outside the south-east, and the only way to enlarge the pool of talent is to enable those would-be contributors to take part.

Answer by Peter Dunphy

The reason for the London location of the Policy Working Groups is that these groups are supported by campaign/HQ staff and contain Parliamentarians. I will take the question back to the FFAC as we are currently undertaking a significant review.

There is a danger of meetings being unrepresentative, however we are a membership organisation in which every pound counts.

Supplementary

Face to face meetings are important in order to include the poor and dispossessed.

Answer by Peter Dunphy

We will make Skype available to people where possible, but in a long meeting it may not be convenient. We will look into that in the review.

Federal Policy Committee**Q1 Submitted by Joe Otten**

In the event that the Trident motion is passed unamended, will the party's overall policy on nuclear disarmament be, in the view of the FPC, a unilateralist or a multilateralist one? Or will this be unclear?

Answer by Duncan Brack

The Federal Policy committee has not discussed this. Conference, not the Policy Committee, decides the policy of the party, and neither needs or should receive any guidance from the Committee in debating policy.

Supplementary

The motion does not address the question of unilateralism vs multilateralism. Does the motion set policy or merely delete this?

Answer by Duncan Brack

I have nothing to add to my previous answer.

Parliamentary Parties

No questions to the Commons.

Questions to the Lords:

Q1 Submitted by Andrew Hudson

Did the Liberal Democrats in the Lords press for greater devolved powers without requiring mayors?

Answer by Lord Newby

We did several things on this front. We passed an amendment with Labour which means the Government wouldn't be able to demand a mayor for a town as a condition for devolution, though we do expect this to be overturned in the Commons. We also proposed other amendments for more flexible arrangements, but as they did not have Labour support, they did not pass.

Q2 Catherine Smart

Could we do more to promote proportional representation for local government?

Answer by Lord Newby

We would like to be able to do that. However, it is very difficult to make progress when we do not have the support of Labour or the Conservatives.

Questions to the European Party:

Q2 Submitted by Andrew Hudson

What has been done about wildlife crime and wildlife trophies?

Answer by Catherine Bearder MEP

I have set up a cross party group of MEPs on wildlife crime – we call ourselves 'MEPs for Wildlife'. The idea is to push the Commission into coming forward with an action plan on wildlife crime, which is now the 4th largest organised crime activity on the planet. Part of that is the trade in illegal wildlife – all sorts of wild things are being bought and sold. One of the ways people get round the law on trade is to hunt the animals themselves. They then own that skin/head/etc. and then they can import that into the EU as their own property. We are pushing for now is to ban lions being imported into the EU. This trade is decimating the lion population. We are working hard cross-party to stop this.

Supplementary

Is Catherine aware of the negative economic effects of conservation?

Answer by Catherine Bearder MEP

I hear that argument, but if you look at the actual economics, there is much more money to be made in conservation and in the resulting tourism associated with that conservation. It is better in the long term, though I realise the short term may be difficult.

Questions from the floor:

Member from D66 offers formal congratulations to the Liberal Democrats

Answer by Tom Brake MP

Thank you very much – I agree. What we realised from the outset was that as a junior party in a Coalition, we were going to come out badly at the next election, though I don't think we realised how badly we would do. I'm not sure we could have done much more. We need to clearly identify ourselves with the economic success of the last couple of years. We have to push the message even harder, because the press is very reluctant to sing our praises. To make clear how difficult it was, for every Liberal Democrat on the news, there were 5 Conservative ministers.

Q3 Ian Idlehard

What can ALDE individual members do to support you [Catherine Bearder] in European Parliament?

Answer by Catherine Bearder MEP

Sign up. We will get in contact to let you know about how to get involved. We need to know where you are to give you resources. Do get in contact with my office. There will be other groups besides the Liberal Democrats who will support the Yes campaign, so do get involved with those as well.

Answer by Tom Brake MP

A lot of the European campaign will be fought on social media. We don't have the resources to do an effective paper campaign. We need to be cost-effective. Writing letters to your local paper would be very helpful to the campaign.

Q5 Tom Barney (Lancaster)

Will you be inviting more of your fellow liberals to speak in the UK over the coming year?

Answer by Catherine Bearder MEP

I have had so many offers of help from fellow liberals in Europe. We will be inviting them to speak and will arrange debates.

John Cowley [Nottingham] noted that the number of Liberal Democrats in the House of Lords reflected what the Liberal Democrats should have in the Commons. He also argued that the Lords should oppose the Conservative legislation.

Answer by Lord Newby

Broadly speaking, the balance across Parliament is correct. The Salisbury Convention was introduced at a time of a huge Parliamentary majority for the Tories. However, the Lords does have a right to say no when the country thinks differently to the government.

Answer by Tom Brake MP

We have a track record of opposing Tory measures, while Labour have sat on their hands. A classic example of that is the recent welfare bill.

Q6 Suzanne Fletcher

I realise there are depleted resources at the moment, but a condensed newsletter with the happenings of the Parliamentary Parties would be very much appreciated by the members.

Answer by Tom Brake MP

Refer to our social media accounts – it is the best way to get information from the Parliamentary Party out.

Q7 Ben Thomas

With regards to EU referendum and TTIP, what can be done to fight the level of misinformation? Also, is there any chance that the passage of TTIP may overturn the SNP's ban on GMOs?

Answer by Catherine Bearder MEP

You are completely right. Send links of European Commission website to combat this information every time you receive an email.

Q8 Jo Woods

I want the MEPs to scrutinise TTIP in great detail. I am very concerned that in the agreement business has too much power, more than political power.

Answer by Catherine Bearder MEP

No. This is a government-to-government negotiation. Big businesses benefit from the non-passage of this bill, as without free trade SMEs cannot compete. This is the most transparent trade agreement ever. The NHS and other public services are no part of TTIP. It will create more equal trade and better standards overall. There will be scrutiny however. If you want to know more, go to the European Commission website.

Answer by Tom Brake MP

It is worth noting that the UK Parliament will have the final say on whether to accept TTIP.

Motions Not Passed

Deputy Leader – Constitutional Amendment

In 9.1: delete 'and, if thought fit, a Deputy Leader'.

In Article 10, title: after 'The Leader' insert 'and Deputy Leader'.

In 10.1: after 'The Leader' insert 'and Deputy Leader'.

Insert new 10.3:

10.3 An election for the Deputy Leader shall be called upon:

- (a) the Deputy Leader asking for an election;
- (b) the death or incapacity of the Deputy Leader;
- (c) the receipt by the President of the resignation of the Deputy Leader or of a declaration of intent to resign upon the election of a new Leader;
- (d) the receipt by the President of a requisition submitted by at least 75 Local Parties (including for this purpose, the Specified Associated Organisation or Organisations representing youth and/ or students) following the decision of a quorate general meeting; or
- (e) the first anniversary of the preceding general election being reached without an election being called under any of paragraphs (a) through (d), provided that the Federal Executive may postpone such an election for no more than one year by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting.

In (new) 10.4: after 'Leader' insert 'and Deputy Leader', and delete 'an election' and insert 'elections'.

(New) 10.6 becomes 10.6 (a).

In (new) 10.6 (a): delete 'not less than' and insert 'no fewer than'.

After 10.6 (a), insert:

(b) Nominations for the Deputy Leader must be of a member of the Party, supported by 200 members in aggregate in no fewer than 20 Local Parties (including, for this purpose, the Specified Associated Organisations representing youth and students as provided by Article 13.8) and must indicate acceptance of nomination.

Background Briefing

This motion was referred back to the Federal Executive's Governance Review.

Leader's Veto – Constitutional Amendment

In article 7.3: at the end of the first sentence insert ‘, and subject to the Leader’s right to veto the inclusion of any specific policy’.

Background Briefing

A procedural motion to move next business was passed and Conference did not vote on this motion.