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Homes and Planning

Consultation Paper 149

Background

This consultation paper is presented as the first stage in the development of new Party policy in relation to Homes and Planning. It does not represent agreed Party policy. It is designed to stimulate debate and discussion within the Party and outside; based on the response generated and on the deliberations of the working group a full policy paper will be drawn up and presented to Conference for debate.

The paper has been drawn up by a working group appointed by the Federal Policy Committee and chaired by Cllr Peter Thornton. Members of the group are prepared to speak on the paper to outside bodies and to discussion meetings organised within the Party.

Comments on the paper, and requests for speakers, should be addressed to: Joseph Wright, Policy Unit, Liberal Democrats, 1 Vincent Square, London SW1P 2PN. Email: policy.consultations@libdems.org.uk Comments should reach us as soon as possible and no later than 18 March. Further copies of this paper can be found online at www.libdems.org.uk/policy_papers

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1 Introduction

1.1 England's housing market is fundamentally unfair; it has left millions of people in insecure, low quality homes and left a generation of young people unable to achieve the security that older generations once enjoyed. Liberal Democrats seek to correct these injustices, delivering on every person's right to a home of a high standard and in sustainable communities.

1.2 Since housing and planning are a devolved matter, the policies discussed in this consultation paper and in the final paper will be for England only.

1.3 The working group is developing policies in 10 areas:

- Housing numbers
- Social Homes
- Energy and the Environment
- Skills, Labour and Technology
- Tenant and Landlord Rules
- Community and Public Engagement
- Infrastructure and Economic Development
- Second Homes
- Land
- The Planning System

2 A Liberal Approach to Housing

2.1 We believe that everyone has a right to a home; having shelter is essential to good health, well-being and security. We believe that houses should be first and foremost homes rather than financial assets, and we have tried to reflect this view throughout our approach.

2.2 In the UK, there have been two phases of housebuilding; a mixed approach of private and public housing enacted by a variety of governments following the Second World War, and a private sector-led approach with very little public housing that has been dominant since the 1980s.

2.3 We want to develop a new, liberal approach to homes that meet the needs of the country, in particular young people. This means putting power and decision making in the hands of local communities, ensuring that our current and future homes will be sustainable for future generations and respecting people's freedom of choice in what type of tenure and homes they want.

2.4 We want to see a mixture approach to the provision of homes, with a role to play for the public and private sector. Importantly, we want locally accountable and democratically elected bodies to be in the driving seat of planning and development, working with the community and the private sector to deliver the homes that the country needs.

3 Housing Numbers

Existing Policy

3.1 Existing policy is set out in the Autumn 2021 motion *Building Communities*, which commits the Liberal Democrats to:

- A UK-wide target of 380,000 homes per year

The Challenge

3.2 The UK's housing stock is not currently delivering on the need for everyone in the country to have a safe and secure home.

3.3 Over the past decade, successive governments have estimated the requirement for new homes to be over 300,000 homes a year, a target which has not come close to being met. The last time the UK came close to that figure was in the early 1970s. A recent survey of developers, only 42% think the government's target of building 300,000 homes a year on average by the mid 2020s is achievable.

3.4 In the same survey, developers said that land availability (55%); slow planning permission (49%) and skills shortages (47%) were holding them back from building more homes, with only one of these being tackled by the government's planning proposals.

Our Approach

3.5 We believe that our current approach to homes is wrong; a housing target will not deliver homes that meet the nation's needs by itself. Given the scarcity of skills, labour, land and materials, we want to see social homes prioritised over homes for the open market, the details of which are outlined in other sections.

3.6 However, although we reject a top-down approach to housing numbers, we will need a mechanism to enable and encourage local authorities to deliver the right homes. At the moment, governments make use of the Housing Delivery Test and the threat of speculative development if councils fail their tests to incentivise house building. We are open to alternative ways of ensuring that homes are built.

3.7 Fundamentally, we want a locally led system, which prioritises needs, with as much power given to local authorities and communities as possible.

Questions

- A. Do you think aggregate national housing targets will meet the country's housing needs?
- B. Should local targets be set by central government criteria or a locally developed approach?
- C. Should there be national targets for other types of homes - such as social and Affordable Homes?
- D. How do we best present either proposal in the media and on the doorstep?

4 Social and Affordable Homes

Existing Policy

4.1 Existing policy is set out in the Autumn 2021 motion *Building Communities* and the 2019 General Election Manifesto, which commits the Liberal Democrats to:

- Build 150,000 homes for social rent a year
- Devolve full control of Right to Buy to local councils.
- introducing a new Rent to Own model for social housing
- Set clearer standards for homes that are socially rented.
- Require complaints to be dealt with in a timely manner.
- Proactively enforce the regulations that are intended to protect social renters.
- Fully recognise tenant panels so that renters have a voice in landlord governance.

The Challenge

4.2 Since the 1980s, the building of social homes has declined significantly, combined with many social homes being sold, with fewer and fewer social homes available. This in and of itself would not be an issue if everyone's needs were being met by the private sector, but that is not the case. For instance, Lambeth has around 36,000 people on its council

house waiting list, with an average wait of 6.5 years for a home.

4.3 There is also the question of Affordable Homes. Currently, Affordable Homes are defined as being for shared ownership or no more than 80% of the local market rent. In practice, this means that only those who have savings can benefit from shared ownership schemes, whilst in many parts of the South East, London and elsewhere are still unaffordable.

Our Approach

4.4 Our overall aim should be to build enough social homes to meet the needs of the country. In the short term, this would prioritise people in greater need, but eventually social homes should be available for everyone who wants one. This would reduce rents for those in the private sector, as excess demand is taken out of the private rental market.

4.5 Our current policy is to build 150,000 social homes a year. At the moment, the country builds significantly less than this. This could be achieved through a 10 year programme to build 1 million council houses, scaling up to 150,000 over several years, or through an annual programme.

4.6 We will need to change the definition of what an Affordable Home is - the current approach simply doesn't work in many areas, especially the South East and London. One

option is for Affordable Homes to be based on local income rather than rent.

Questions

- A. Why aren't we building enough social homes?
- B. Should we have a national annual target for social homes or a decade long programme?
- C. What mechanisms should we use to enable, encourage and fund councils to build more social homes?
- D. How do we give a meaningful voice to tenants in council and housing association homes?
- E. Should we redefine affordable homes to reflect local income rather than local rents?

5 Energy and the Environment

Existing Policy

5.1 The Liberal Democrats proposed a set of radical proposals to decarbonise the UK's homes and planning system at the last General Election, in policy paper 139 *Tackling the Climate Emergency* (2019) and in the Autumn 2019 motion *Building Communities*. The main policies are:

- Insulate all Britain's homes by 2030
- Require all new homes to be fitted with solar panels
- Providing free retrofits for low-income homes, graduating Stamp Duty Land Tax by the energy rating of the property and reducing VAT on home insulation.
- Empower councils to develop community energy-saving projects, including delivering housing energy efficiency improvements street by street
- Require all new buildings to be built to a zero-carbon standard by 2021, rising to Passivhaus standard by 2025.
- Increase minimum energy efficiency standards for privately rented properties
- Adopt a Zero-Carbon Heat Strategy, requiring the phased installation of heat pumps
- All homes of low-income households to reach at least Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) Band B by 2025 and other homes by 2030.
- Encouraging development plans to include green space within walking distance

- Establish a Green Investment Bank, in order to retrofit existing homes.

The Challenge

5.2 The UK and the world is faced with two of the greatest challenges in history; the Climate Emergency and the Ecological Emergency.

5.3 There are two challenges to making our homes energy sustainable; retrofitting our existing stock of homes and ensuring that new homes are built to the highest standards. Four out of every five homes British people will be living in in 2050 have already been built. If we are serious about tackling climate change, we will need to ensure that these homes are retrofitted to be net-zero.

5.4 We will also save a significant amount of money and carbon in the long term by ensuring that homes are built to high standards from day one, rather than having to be expensively retrofitted later in their life. However, some technology can prove expensive or be rendered obsolete quickly, so it is not as straightforward as it would seem.

Our Approach

5.5 We want to see a future where all homes are able to make a contribution towards tackling the climate and ecological emergencies, which will also cut energy bills and improve public health. We will therefore need to retrofit

existing homes to high standards, and reform the planning system so that all new homes are built to the highest possible standards.

5.6 For existing neighbourhoods, we want to grant councils the powers and resources to create Environmental Improvement Areas. Collaborating with the local community, councils will develop locally-tailored plans to improve particular areas. We also are open to reforming the tax system and other incentives for refurbishing and retrofitting homes.

5.7 The natural environment side of planning, including biodiversity, access to green space and protection of sites among other issues, is covered by the Natural Environment Working Group. You can respond to their consultation paper here: https://www.libdems.org.uk/natural_environment

Questions

- A. How should we retrofit homes in a way that minimises disruption and is socially fair?
- B. What aspects of the planning system need to be changed to deliver a low-carbon future?
- C. How should we fund retrofitting of existing homes?
- D. How should we operate Environmental Improvement Areas?
- E. How should we reform VAT and tax rules to favour refurbishment?

6 Skills, Labour and Technology

Existing Policy

6.1 Existing policy is set out in the 2019 General Election Manifesto and policy paper 139 *Tackling the Climate Emergency*, which commits the Liberal Democrats to:

- Introduce Skills Wallets worth £10,000 for every individual
- Fostering the development of regional industrial innovation clusters
- Developing a zero-carbon skills strategy to tackle any skills gaps that could hinder progress.
- Replace Tier 2 work visas with a more flexible merit-based system.
- Introduce a 'Training up Britain' programme to make the most of migrants' skills

The Challenge

6.2 Over the past hundred years, most industries have changed beyond all recognition, but housing remains broadly similar today - people and tools in a field. The sector has not sufficiently modernised, with Modern Methods of Construction (MMC), which involves offsite homes being assembled on site, an relatively unutilised method of construction.

6.3 Developers are finding that their workforce is rapidly ageing, with few young people wanting to join the sector.

Furthermore, as a result of the Conservatives' Brexit deal and draconian immigration policies, developers are struggling to find workers from abroad, with many returning home, further sapping the workforce.

6.4 There is also a skills shortage for retrofitting homes with green technologies. To meet our climate change objectives, we will have to retrofit an extensive number of homes with insulation, heat pumps

Our Approach

6.5 We want to enact an ambitious training and retraining programme for the construction and installation sector, which will be funded through our Skills Wallet policy. We want to see closer collaboration between local authorities, schools, colleges, universities, developers, installation and greentech companies, so that existing workers are retrained in new methods and technologies, and so that new people are attracted into the sector. This could include apprenticeships and graduate schemes for younger people, with meaningful career progression.

6.6 We also want to see greater investment in MMC, which can deliver high quality homes quickly and affordably. MMC currently suffers from unstable investment, varying significantly with the economic cycle. Our ambitious social homes programme will provide stable demand for the sector - giving investors the confidence to grow the industry.

Questions

- A. In the short run, how do we attract labour from abroad in an ethical and sustainable way?
- B. In the longer term, how do we make construction a more attractive career for younger people?
- C. How should we upskill the construction and installation workforce to meet our housing and climate change objectives?
- D. How do we maximise the use of new technologies like MMC to deliver more high quality homes?

7 Tenant and Landlord Rules

Existing Policy

7.1 Existing policy is set out in the 2019 General Election Manifesto, which commits the Liberal Democrats to:

- Help young people into the rental market by establishing a new Help to Rent scheme
- Promote longer tenancies of three years or more with an inflation-linked annual rent increase built in, to give tenants security and limit rent hikes.
- Improve protections against rogue landlords through mandatory licensing.

The Challenge

7.2 With the decline of home ownership and social homes, there has been a significant rise in the numbers of people living in the private rental sector. Despite this, the rules around private renting are largely unchanged since the 1988 Housing Act, which made assured shorthold tenancy the default.

7.3 The current approach is unfair to both tenants and landlords alike. Renters face constant uncertainty, with the possibility of being evicted at short notice and rent rises once their short term contract has ended. Landlords on the other hand often find that removing difficult tenants, who may be

damaging the property or refusing to pay rent, is expensive and time consuming.

Our Approach

7.4 As liberals, we don't believe in prescribing a particular kind of home or lifestyle - many people choose to live in the private rented sector for the flexibility it offers. We want to see a private rental market that gives people the security and stability that homeowners enjoy, where tenants can live in good conditions.

7.5 We are proposing a register of landlords and a system of landlord licensing. In order to receive a licence, would-be landlords would be required to show that they can meet minimum standards of service and ensure their homes are energy efficient, among other things. We are open to this being administered locally or through a national system.

7.6 To give greater security and stability to tenants, as well as to landlords, we would extend the default tenancy, which is currently 12 months. Various proposals have been put forward, ranging from a longer default tenancy of two years to making indefinite tenancies the default, similar to how rental laws work in Germany.

7.7 We are considering a system of rent smoothing, where rent can only rise in line with inflation for the first few years of a tenancy. This will give tenants security and financial stability,

and prevent unscrupulous landlords raising rent to force out tenants.

Questions

- A. Does the current system give too much power to landlords, tenants or neither?
- B. Should landlords require a licence? If so, should it be a local or national system?
- C. What minimum standards should be required before landlords can have a licence?
- D. Should tenancies be for a longer fixed period of time or indefinite by default?
- E. Should there be some system of rent smoothing or control and what form should it take?

8 Community and Public Engagement

Existing Policy

8.1 Existing policy is set out in policy paper 130 *Power for People and Communities*, which commits the Liberal Democrats to:

- Increasing the openness of decision making, including strengthening transparency rules on planning decisions on council owned land.
- Encouraging the use of deliberative consultation methods such as Citizens' Juries.
- Strengthening the role of individual councillors

The Challenge

8.2 People often feel that they are powerless when it comes to planning and development; the planning system can seem complicated and impossible to understand and people often feel that councils and developers don't listen to them.

8.3 Councils and developers have a duty to consult residents and stakeholders about development. The problem is that what form consultation takes and how developers should respond to consultation responses is only vaguely defined. Consultation also tends to happen at a late stage, when many aspects of the development are fixed or cannot be altered. Many developers do the right thing, trying to listen to

the community and build the appropriate homes and infrastructure, but this is in many ways optional.

When the public do respond to consultations on new housing developments, those who respond are disproportionately from better off and older backgrounds. Homeowners and retirees dominate the discussion, whilst younger people, ethnic minorities, renters and those from less well-off backgrounds are marginalised. Polling undertaken by Shelter has shown that 48% of people were supportive of more homes being built in their local areas, with 30% opposed; yet it is the 30% who shout the loudest.

Our Approach

8.4 We want a planning system with real meaningful community engagement, where everyone's voice is heard and people have real influence over the future of their community.

8.5 We proposed strengthening the duty to consult, which would include requiring developers and councils to make special efforts to reach those whose voices are currently marginalised - renters, young people, BAME and poorer households. It would also require more engagement earlier on in the process.

8.6 We have also considered what role Neighbourhood can play in engaging the community. Neighbourhood Plans currently only cover a minority of England and are disproportionately located in Southern England's smaller towns. We believe Neighbourhood Plans have a lot of potential

for engaging the community and making a more positive case for development, but they are only part of the solution - they are not suitable for all places, particularly urban areas and many rural parishes. We would need to develop an alternative means of community engagement for those areas.

8.7 We will also consider reforming Local Plans, to make them more accountable and reflective of local demands. Currently, Local Plans have to conform to central government housing plans, we want to see a bottom-up approach which the community can really be part of.

Questions

- A. How should we strengthen the duty to consult so that all voices are heard?
- B. Should developers be required to consult earlier in the process, such as before an application is submitted?
- C. Would spreading Neighbourhood Plans to all parts of the country be the most appropriate vehicle for community engagement or would another form of neighbourhood planning be more effective?
- D. How do we spread the use of Neighbourhood Plans, especially outside of Southern England?
- E. How should we reform Local Plans to make them more accessible and locally accountable?

9 Infrastructure and Economic Development

Existing Policy

9.1 Existing policy is set out in the Autumn 2021 motion *Building Communities* and the 2019 General Election Manifesto, which commits the Liberal Democrats to:

- Local authorities to take the lead on house building by planning all necessary infrastructure and only allowing development once it has been built
- Introduce a nationwide strategy to promote walking and cycling, including the creation of dedicated safe cycling lanes
- Build on the Local Sustainable Transport Fund to reduce the number of cars used for commuting, and encourage the development of car-sharing schemes and autonomous vehicles

The Challenge

9.2 Lack of infrastructure is a common concern among people objecting to new housing developments, as well as causing significant economic, environmental and social problems.

9.3 A survey by the Institute of Civil Engineers has found that 60% of the public would support new homes locally if the necessary infrastructure was built at the same time.

9.4 There is also a tendency to build the neighbourhoods of the past rather than the future. Too many new developments are car dependent due to lack of physical, economic and social infrastructure, especially public transport.

Our Approach

9.5 We want to build sustainable communities, with the appropriate social, economic and environmental infrastructure in place from day one. Homes need to be built with the future in mind, which means building them without car dependency.

9.6 Whilst we support an infrastructure first approach, we want to avoid just building homes where there is already infrastructure - this has led to over development in the South East and London and underdevelopment elsewhere. We will therefore need a new approach to funding infrastructure. We think Section 106 contributions and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) payments from developers broadly work well, but want to see greater transparency in how the money is used. We want to see the government, local and national, take a greater role in funding infrastructure, with greater certainty. The Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) needs to be reformed so that it is a continuous stream of funding rather than bidding rounds - with money meeting needs rather than going to the council that can write the most fluent business case.

9.7 We also want to see greater cross-boundary collaboration and pooling of resources for larger projects. The Autumn 2021 motion *A Framework for England in a Federal UK* pledged to create democratically accountable regional authorities in England, which would provide coordination between local authorities and take the lead on larger infrastructure projects.

9.8 Infrastructure will also need to take into account the role of utility companies in meeting the future needs of settlements, especially with regards to flooding and water provisions.

Questions

- A. How should infrastructure be funded?
- B. Do CIL and S106 need reform?
- C. How do we make our infrastructure fit for the future by discouraging car dependency?
- D. How should we reform HIF to meet infrastructure needs?
- E. What role should regional governments play in delivering infrastructure?

10 Second Homes and Investment Property

Existing Policy

10.1 Existing policy is set out in the 2019 General Election Manifesto, which commits the Liberal Democrats to:

- Allow local authorities to increase council tax by up to 500 per cent where homes are being bought as second homes with a stamp duty surcharge on overseas residents purchasing such properties

The Challenge

10.2 Second homes represent a serious challenge in many parts of England. In many parts of the country, especially Cornwall, Devon, the Lake District and London among others, there has been a steep rise in second homes, which drives up house prices and makes communities unviable. There are estimated to be 550,000 second homes in the UK, more than double the number of homes we build each year.

10.3 They also frequently do not pay tax; a “furnished holiday let” can be let out for 105 days a year and then no longer has to pay council tax, paying business rates instead. However, the properties then become eligible for small business rate relief and can frequently get their entire tax bill cancelled.

Our Approach

10.4 As liberals, we do not believe in dictating what other people do with their lives and property provided it doesn't cause harm to others. We therefore want to see locally controlled powers to curb second homes, once it is demonstrably clear that second homes are harming the viability of the rest of the community.

10.5 We propose granting powers to local authorities to change their council tax and small business rates relief rules, so that second home owners will pay their fair share of tax. We don't want to see a uniform national system, as the problem varies significantly across the country.

10.6 In Cornwall, Devon and the Lake District, this will predominantly affect holiday lets and holiday homes, in London and other cities this will predominantly impact on empty investment properties and the empty homes of the very well off.

10.7 However, we do not want to unduly punish those who make use of their second homes. In many cities, small homes are often used Monday to Thursday, with the owner staying at a main home, often with their family, over the weekend.

Questions

A. What extra powers do councils need to make second

- homes pay their share of tax?
- B. Should councils have the power to prevent homes becoming second homes, either new or existing builds?
 - C. Should the system be national or local?
 - D. Should taxes rise with additional properties or be on an individual basis?
 - E. What criteria should be used to determine if second homes are harming community cohesion?

11 Land

Existing Policy

11.1 Existing policy is set out in the Autumn 2021 motion *Building Communities*, the 2019 General Election Manifesto, and the Autumn 2018 motion *Taxing Land, Not Investment*, which commits the Liberal Democrats to:

- Reforming the 1961 Land Compensation Act to give local authorities the power to acquire landbanked land from housing developers at its 'current use value', in order to be used to meet the community's need for housing.
- Increasing local authority compulsory purchase powers.
- Replace Business Rates in England with a Commercial Landowner Levy based solely on the land value of commercial sites
- Ending discounts for empty and derelict premises and allowing councils to tax unfinished commercial developments
- Annual revaluations of commercial land values by the Valuation Office Agency and the completion of a comprehensive and publicly-accessible Land Registry

The Challenge

11.2 The cost of a home is determined by three things - the costs of building it, a developers profit margin and the price of

the land. Land prices are the main driver of divergent house prices in England - in the South East the price of land can constitute 70% of a home's price - leading to some of the highest house prices in Europe.

Our Approach

11.3 We think there is extensive scope for reforming the regulation of land. In particular, we want to find ways of better capturing the rises in land value as a result of infrastructure or planning permission being granted - and using the proceeds to fund further infrastructure.

11.4 The Land Compensation Act and compulsory purchase powers need to be reformed, so that local authorities can purchase land at its current value for building social homes and infrastructure. This will enable social homes and infrastructure to be delivered faster and at lower cost - as well as preventing excessive profits for landowners.

11.5 We are also considering other approaches to land reform, including greater use of Community Land Auctions - where the community acts as a developer.

Questions

- A. How do we best capture land value rises from development?
- B. Does the Land Compensation Act need further reform beyond our existing proposals?

- C. What safeguards should be put in place so that councils cannot abuse their additional powers?
- D. How should we reform land taxation to encourage better development?
- E. Can Community Land Auctions provide a role in the planning and development process?

12 The Planning System

Existing Policy

12.1 Existing policy is set out in the Autumn 2021 motion *Building Communities* and the 2019 General Election Manifesto, which commits the Liberal Democrats to:

- Amend planning rules to promote sustainable transport and land use
- Scrapping the rule which allows developers to convert offices and shops into residential properties without planning permission.
- Introducing penalties for developers who fail to develop land that has been given full planning permission.
- Introducing a condition that any plots sold for development must be built upon on schedule, and if the developers fail to do this, then they will become open to bids from other developers

The Challenge

12.2 The planning system is often perceived as unfair, slow and unaccountable to local people. A lot of these problems are due to resource shortages in council planning departments. A decade of squeezed budgets has led to many councils scaling back their planning departments, and there are many anecdotes of town planners leaving to work in the private sector, where pay and conditions are better.

12.3 There is also a lack of integrated planning between transport and licensing authorities, utilities, across local authority boundaries and public service providers.

Our Approach

12.4 We believe that a locally accountable, democratic planning system has a positive role to play in delivering homes and sustainable communities. The overall structure of the planning system broadly achieves this, but there is a significant lack of resources in local authorities' planning departments, which undermines the system. We want to see planning departments better resourced so they can do their jobs effectively.

12.5 Another problem we want to address is viability assessments. There are many reasons why original planning conditions can't be met, but the system at the moment is open to abuse. We want to see the conditions around tightened and are open to suggestions on how to achieve this in a fair way.

12.6 We also think there is a case for regional planning, to coordinate across boundaries, plan economic development and large. At the moment, this is often done through unaccountable or impermanent bodies such as the Ox-Cam Arc, but democratically accountable English regions can provide this.

12.7 In certain areas, particularly to do with building safety, energy, the environment, space and light standards, we believe that minimum standards should be set nationally, which will give good developers greater certainty and ensure that unscrupulous ones can not go below standards.

12.8 Finally, we want to see utility companies, public service providers, transport and licensing authorities integrated into the planning system, rather than merely being statutory consultees, so that the needs of the area are fully considered during development.

Questions

- A. How can we increase resources in the planning system?
- B. Should we change viability rules? If so, what should we change?
- C. What parts of the planning system should be moved to regional bodies?
- D. What minimum standards should be set nationally?
- E. How do we integrate utilities, transport and licensing authorities, and public service providers into the planning system?

Homes and Planning Working Group

The members of the working group who have prepared this consultation paper are listed below.

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Further copies of this paper can be found online at
https://www.libdems.org.uk/homes_and_planning

References

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<https://www.pbctoday.co.uk/news/planning-construction-news/integrated-infrastructure-housing/62986/>

Autumn 2021 Building Communities Motion:

<https://www.libdems.org.uk/f20-building-communities>

Autumn 2021 A Framework for England in a Federal UK Motion:

<https://www.libdems.org.uk/f21-england-federal-uk>

2019 General Election Manifesto:

https://d3n8a8pro7vhm.cloudfront.net/libdems/pages/57307/attachments/original/1574876236/Stop_Brexit_and_Build_a_Brighter_Future.pdf?1574876236

Policy Paper 139 Tackling the Climate Emergency:

[https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/libdems/pages/46346/attachments/original/1564404765/139 - Tackling the Climate Emergency_web.pdf?1564404765](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/libdems/pages/46346/attachments/original/1564404765/139_-_Tackling_the_Climate_Emergency_web.pdf?1564404765)

Policy Paper 130 Power for People and Communities

[https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/libdems/pages/43501/attachments/original/1533290052/Policy Paper 130 - Power for People and Communities.pdf?1533290052](https://d3n8a8pro7vhmx.cloudfront.net/libdems/pages/43501/attachments/original/1533290052/Policy_Paper_130_-_Power_for_People_and_Communities.pdf?1533290052)

Remit

The remit of this group is to review the party's policies on homes and planning in England, at local, regional and national levels, and develop updated proposals which communicate our values of liberty, equality, democracy, community, human rights, internationalism and environmentalism in a way which secures the election of as many Liberal Democrats as possible, in order to promote our vision of society and remove from power a Conservative government that is failing the country.

The group will be expected to build on existing policy proposals as set out in the 2019 Election Manifesto, Policy Paper 104 Decent Homes for All (2012), Policy Paper 130 Power for People and Communities (2018), Policy Paper 129 A Rural Future: Time to Act (2018), Policy Paper 136 A Fairer Share for All (2019) and Policy Paper 139 Tackling the Climate Emergency (2019), and the emerging policy paper on the Natural Environment. The group is expected to consider and address Liberal Democrat principles on diversity and equalities in developing their proposals.

This group will as a top priority:

- Develop up to three headline policies on homes and planning which the party can communicate widely to win votes.

The working group will develop policies on:

- How we can use the planning system to promote sustainable economic development
- How many homes need to be built, what kind of homes they should be and where they should be built, including the appropriate roles of UK, England, regional and local targets
- How we can deliver more Affordable and social homes in particular
- Creating environmentally sustainable and climate resilient communities
- Reform of tenant, landlord, shared-ownership, leasehold and second home rules
- Meeting the housing needs of specific groups such as care leavers
- Building safety
- Building control
- How we empower communities to have greater control over planning
- The relationship between local, regional and central government in England over planning and housing

The group will also need to consider the development of more detailed proposals to implement relevant headline policies included in the Tackling the Climate Emergency paper and the emerging Natural Environment paper, including making the planning system promote biodiversity and reduce the UK's carbon emissions.

The group will also consider the need for institutional change at central, regional and local government levels to embed these approaches firmly in policy.

The group will take evidence and consult widely from both within and outside the party. This evidence should inform the group's proposals, which will be presented alongside an analysis of costs and an Equalities Impact Assessment.

A policy paper of no longer than 10,000 words should be produced for debate at Autumn Conference 2022. Prior to that a consultative session should be held at Spring Conference 2022, and a draft policy paper should be presented to the Federal Policy Committee by June 2022.

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