



LIBERAL
DEMOCRATS

Autumn Conference

Conference Report

Bournemouth 19th – 23rd September 2009

A summary of Bournemouth conference; a report on feedback about conference from Federal Conference Committee; the full text of Nick Clegg's Leader's Speech; policy motions, business motions, and constitutional amendments passed by conference, as amended; and answers to questions on reports to conference from party bodies.

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Conference Report and other conference documents are available in clear print, plain text and as pdf files, see:

www.libdems.org.uk/conference

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Bournemouth Conference Summary



Conference kicked off on Saturday morning with consultation sessions on localism, quality of life and disability. These are informal events, usually held in the main hotel, to allow discussion of policy proposals at an early stage before they come for formal debate and amendment at a future conference.

The main business of Saturday afternoon was the policy paper *Real Women*, proposed by Jo Swinson MP. In a passionate debate, many speeches addressed an amendment opposing proposals in the paper to regulate the use of digital retouching in advertisements; the amendment was defeated. The involvement of women in politics and TV coverage of women's sport were also major issues under discussion.

Saturday evening saw the conference rally, '*Liberal Democrats: Ready to Win*'. Speakers included Nick Clegg MP and Charles Kennedy MP, but for many the highlight was former Play School presenter and educational campaigner Floella Benjamin.

Nick Clegg held a question and answer session on the Sunday afternoon, in which he responded to a wide range of questions from conference representatives, including whether the Liberal Democrats should go on Question Time with the BNP, how the party can increase representation of women in Parliament, and what our response should be to the recession and the need to reduce public spending. Other sessions included speeches from Norman Lamb MP on health, Ed Davey MP on foreign affairs and the leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats,



Tavish Scott MSP, and debates on a policy paper on the UK's response to globalisation, *Thriving in a Globalised World*, and on the party's principled stand on civil liberties.

Monday's business started with a debate on MPs' expenses, which featured an especially hard-hitting speech by Chris Davies MEP. A question and answer session on crime policy, chaired by Brian Paddick, was perhaps the most thought-provoking event of the conference. There were also debates on a well-received policy paper on the natural environment, *Our Natural Heritage*, and on proposals to improve the treatment of the armed forces in the motion *Reaffirming the Military Covenant*. The main policy controversy of the week emerged from Vince Cable's economy keynote speech, in which he floated the idea of a tax on million-pound-plus properties – the so-called 'mansion tax'. MPs Tim Farron and Sarah Teather also gave well-received speeches, on rural affairs and housing respectively.

The debate on the pre-manifesto paper, *A Fresh Start for Britain*, occupied most of Tuesday morning. Representatives raised a wide range of issues, including the party's approach to spending cuts and various reforms to the tax system; many focused on the case



for the party's existing opposition to tuition fees. One of the best-received speeches was a sustained critique of Tory Shadow Chancellor George Osborne by Lord Oakeshott: 'Britain in recession can't risk a Chancellor on work experience'. Highlights of the afternoon included a speech on crime by Chris Huhne MP and debates on child protection and on energy and climate change, in which the conference reaffirmed the party's anti-nuclear stance.

The final morning of conference included a keynote speech on equality by Lynne Featherstone MP and a debate on the consumer policy paper, *Are We Being Served?* The afternoon started with the presentation of a number of party awards; a particularly warm reception was given to Lord Avebury (Eric Lubbock), who received the Liberal International Prize for Freedom.

Nick Clegg's main speech formed the culmination of the conference. His main message was that Labour has failed and has run out of ideas and energy, the Conservatives offer only fake change, and only the Liberal Democrats bring hope for a different and better future.

Conference Feedback

Federal Conference Committee (FCC) always takes conference-goers' feedback seriously, devoting our first post-conference meeting to a debrief session. This year we replaced the paper questionnaire with an online version. This was very successful, with almost 500 respondents; in some ways too successful, as people not only ticked the boxes but gave us additional responses to the questions – leaving us with almost 3,000 individual comments.

Overall impressions

Overall, people enjoyed conference; 87 per cent rated it as excellent or good. This was down, however, from last year's 97 per cent; criticisms expressed included a lack of controversial debates, and mixed messages over public expenditure and the 'mansion tax'. There's not much FCC can do about either, but we will be feeding this back to party communications staff and the Shadow Cabinet. Although there were a few comments about FCC suppressing controversial debates, in reality we don't have the opportunity; we don't write the motions on the agenda, we just select them from amongst those submitted, and no one put in anything particularly controversial this time. Having said that, 'debates' in general, and the party's democracy in action, attracted many approving comments.



The venue

In general people liked Bournemouth – and its weather! – with 91 per cent being happy to return. The main negative aspects were the hills – when we come back we'll aim to improve the shuttle bus service – and catering in the Conference Centre; we'll feed this back to them, and put more pressure on centres to improve this in future. Accommodation costs were markedly up on last year; unfortunately this is the market in action, with hotels jacking up their prices when conferences come to town. Next year's two urban venues, Birmingham and Liverpool, ought to offer a wider range of accommodation, and we'll be working with them to highlight low-cost options.

The conference agenda

Seventy-six per cent of respondents thought we got the balance of the agenda about right, whereas 14 per cent thought we had too many 'non-debate' items (speeches, Q&As, etc.) and 2 per cent too many debates. Assuming that the much higher number of good motions submitted this year carries on, we'll aim to include a few more



motions on future agendas, dropping some of the less successful open discussion sessions.

There were mixed responses to some of this year's agenda innovations. The changes in the motion deadline structure meant that every motion was open to amendment until shortly before conference. We kept the final timings out of the *Conference Agenda* when it was distributed in August to allow us the flexibility to change debate timings when we knew what amendments we'd selected – and in the end we changed most of the timings from our provisional allocation, sometimes quite substantially, which in turn allowed us to select more amendments than we normally can, which was a definite positive outcome.

We kept the provisional timings out of the *Conference Agenda* because we thought the potential for confusion when they were changed was too high. However, the system didn't work as we had intended; the email announcing the new *Conference Extra* publication (which included the final timings) the week before conference didn't highlight it sufficiently, and it wasn't available easily enough at conference – so too many people didn't see the timings until the very last moment. This shouldn't have happened; next year we will still keep the timings out of the *Agenda* but will make sure we get the announcement of the final timings the week before conference right, including issuing a new *Conference Diary*, with the final timings, to replace the pull-out in the *Conference Directory*.

Our other innovation was putting the leader's speech in the afternoon, partly in the hope of gaining better press coverage, but also with the aim of extending debating and fringe time, and of making the final session, including party awards and the appeal, work better. The response was mixed: 40 per cent wanted to move back to the morning,



Conference Feedback continued



30 per cent preferred the new timing and the rest didn't mind. Next year we will try it again, but with modifications: we will bring the session forward to finish at about 3.00pm (we accept that 4.00pm causes too many travel difficulties) and we'll aim to have a stronger agenda, and more training and fringe, on the final morning. (In the end the press coverage wasn't much better than before, partly because of the clash with Barack Obama's speech to the UN – something we didn't know about until too late.)

In comparison with last year, there were virtually no complaints about conference chairing. As usual, conference chairs discriminated slightly in favour of women speakers; excluding movers, summators and interveners (over whom chairs don't have any choice), 36 per cent of cards submitted, but 43 per cent of those called, were from women. The *Fresh Start for Britain* debate, however, led to a few comments about too many Federal Policy Committee speakers. In retrospect we think they were right; although as the chair of that debate I didn't deliberately call FPC members (most of them wrote better cards), I shouldn't have called so many, and we will look out for this in the future – though it's not a common problem.

Conference documents

There were a few questions about why the *Conference Agenda* and *Directory* documents were separate. In fact they always have been (for autumn conferences), but this year they went out in separate mailings a couple of weeks apart. Since we've scrapped the old *Preliminary Agenda*, which would have been circulated in June, we wanted to get the agenda out to people as early as possible, to give them maximum time to consider the motions and submit amendments. On the other hand, we like to give fringe organisers longer to sort out their meetings, the details of



which are included in the *Conference Directory* – so this one was produced later. So we will be keeping the two separate, but looking again at how we present information to make it as user-friendly as possible.

The fringe

As usual there were many comments about the fringe, including the problems of too much choice, venues too far apart, clashing meetings on similar topics and overcrowded rooms. It's worth emphasising that FCC does not control the fringe in any way – that's why it's called the 'fringe' – and although Conference Office always informs organisers where we can spot likely problems, people tend to book rooms very early and then submit information at the last moment, when it's difficult to do anything about clashes. It's also difficult for organisers to predict the size of their audiences – and we can't force them to book larger rooms (which cost more) even if we could work it out. Many of these problems, however, are those of success – conference is attracting more fringes than ever before – and in general people thoroughly enjoyed the fringe, with 86 per cent rating it excellent or good.



As people observed, there was a problem with the Climate Clinic meetings not being advertised in the *Conference Directory*. This happened because the organisers booked a non-wheelchair-accessible venue, and under our rules (set by conference several years ago) we will not promote such meetings. We'll aim to work more closely with them in future to avoid this happening.

Conclusions

Space doesn't allow me to give FCC's responses to all the other comments, on registration, security, the exhibition, the rally, disability access and so on, but rest assured that we have read them all carefully. Thanks too, to all the many people who commented approvingly on the high levels of organisation and professionalism. Of course we can always make improvements in particular areas, but in general people seemed to think we aren't doing too badly. Thanks are due to my hard-working colleagues in FCC, Policy & Research Unit and Conference Office for that – and see you all next year!

Duncan Brack
Chair, Federal Conference Committee

Nick Clegg's Leader's Speech to Conference

In the last eight weeks, 28 British soldiers and Royal Marines have been killed in Afghanistan. However easy it may be to forget, we are a nation at war. Already more than 75,000 British men and women have done tours of duty in Afghanistan.

Thousands upon thousands of our compatriots, putting their lives on the line in the burning heat and the frozen winters of a country on the other side of the world. I want to pay tribute, on behalf of all of us, to the tenacity, bravery and extraordinary professionalism of every one of them. Their families, too, have borne with incredible fortitude the separation, the fear, and the anguish of bereavement. We salute them.

I'm afraid the hardship has been deepened, for all of them, by the enormous difficulties of this war. After nearly 8 years, victory not only seems more distant than ever, failure seems inevitable unless we change course.

I know some of you believe we should call for British troops to withdraw now. If things continue on the present disastrous course, then sooner or later that is a judgement which we may need to make. That is why we must change course. We have one more chance, one only, to turn things around.

Success cannot be secured through military means alone. Development assistance must be bigger and faster. Talks with moderate elements of the Taliban network must commence. The international community must at last agree to a single plan in place of the present patchwork of duplication, disunity and muddle.

The threadbare legitimacy of the government in Kabul must be strengthened by reaching out across ethnic and tribal divisions. And here at home Gordon Brown must change gear, too. He must now show the leadership and conviction that has so far been so disastrously lacking in making the case to the British people.

You cannot win a war on half horse power. We owe it to the young men and women serving in Helmand to give them all the political leadership and all the resources they need to do the job. We should either do this properly or we shouldn't do it at all. So I say to the Prime Minister: time is running out.

Unless you change course, there will be no choice but to withdraw, and that would be a betrayal of the servicemen and women who have already made such enormous sacrifices on our behalf. I do not want British troops to come home defeated by political failure. I want them to come home, mission successfully completed, with their heads held high.

Today is the beginning of real change in Britain

Let me tell you why I want to be Prime Minister. It's because I want to change our country for good.

Because I want to live in a country where prejudice, insularity and fear are conquered by the great British traditions of tolerance, pluralism and justice. Where political life is not a Westminster village freak show, but open, accessible and helpful in people's everyday lives. Where fine words on the environment are translated into real action.

Where every child can grow up safe and secure, able to flourish, no matter their background, their income, or the colour of their skin. Where we make sense of the complex, globalised world of our times and play a creative role in shaping it.

Where rights, freedom and privacy are not the playthings of the government but safeguarded for everyone. I want to be Prime Minister because I want to be the first Prime Minister in my lifetime to be on the side of the weak against the powerful, on the side of freedom against conformity, on the side of human innovation against government decree.

I want to be Prime Minister because I have spent half a lifetime imagining a better society. And I want to spend the next half making it happen.

I was lucky enough to be brought up in a large, warm family that had almost no time at all for the status quo. By parents who encouraged us, required us, as children always to ask why. Always to assume that there is a better way of doing things. If you only bother to look for it. That's the spirit I found in the Liberal Democrats. It's why I joined, and why I wanted to lead our party.

Friends, this has been quite a week for us. I've been called a number of names. Even 'a good leader'. By Evan Harris. I am never going to duck asking the important questions, however difficult they are. But I am immensely proud to lead a party that actually debates things, openly and democratically. Let's always remember: we are in this together.

So let us not look back any longer. Let us look forward. From this point on, keep your eyes on our goal. Let today mark the beginning of real change in Britain.

These are extraordinary times. A global recession. Mass unemployment. A broken political system. Government finances in crisis. And still: inequality rising and climate change spinning out of control. Faced with these extraordinary challenges; we need an extraordinary government.

Blue-Red, Red-Blue

Because one thing, above all others, is certain. The way we got here is not the way out. The blue-red, red-blue politics that got us into this mess cannot clear it up. The way we got here is not the way out. Britain needs a change of direction. Let today mark the beginning of real change in Britain.

Look at what the old red-blue politics offers. Back in 1997, Peter Mandelson told us to judge Labour after 10 years in government. It's been twelve years. And we have made our judgement.

If you're poor, you're still far less likely to go to university than if you're better off. If you're from an ethnic minority, you're more likely to be stopped by the police, even when you haven't done anything wrong. If you're a woman, you'll probably be paid less than the men you know. And if you're a child born in the poorest neighbourhood of my city, Sheffield, you will probably die 14 years before a child born the same day, just up the road, in a more affluent part of town. We have made our judgement of Labour. They betrayed the best hopes of a generation.

People are hungry for change. So the question now is: what change? David Cameron talks about change. But is it real change?

He talks about broken Britain but campaigns for tax breaks for the very rich. He says he cares about the environment but then teams up with climate change deniers in Europe. He claims he wants to clean up politics but won't tell you whether his biggest donor pays taxes in Britain. That isn't real change, it's fake change. And Britain deserves better.

To be fair, the Conservatives do have one belief. That it's their turn to govern. They think power should come easily. You get the sense from so many of them that they became Conservatives mostly because it looked like the simplest route to a job in the cabinet.

I chose the Liberal Democrats. Not because I thought it would be an easy route to power. I knew it would be hard. But because I wanted to fight for what I believed in, however hard, however long it took.

The Conservatives want to inherit power; I want us to earn it.

The thing about David Cameron is – the PR might be good, but what's behind it? It's like my grandmother would have said. There's less to him than meets the eye.

As for me? Well, occasionally I'm a bit too blunt in interviews – but at least you know I'm not just spinning you a line. I speak out: On the Speaker of the House of Commons; On Afghanistan;



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On bankers' bonuses;
On citizenship rights for the Gurkhas.

And I am so honoured that some of you have been able to be here with us today.

People are turning to the Liberal Democrats. Because they see there's something different about us. It's our pioneering spirit.

It was a liberal, Gladstone, who helped develop the concept of universal human rights. It was a liberal, Lloyd George, who introduced the world's first universal state pension. It was a liberal, Beveridge, who invented the NHS.

Ours is the party of Paddy Ashdown, the first person to put climate change on the national agenda. Ours is the party of Charles Kennedy. Of Ming Campbell. Who used all the courage of their convictions to oppose the illegal invasion of Iraq. Ours is the party of Vince Cable, the first to see problems brewing in our economy, the first with a vision of how to take us to recovery.

It's because Liberal Democrats are different that, when Gordon Brown let casino investment banking loose on our economy. The Conservatives said yes, and only Liberal Democrats said no.

When Gordon Brown let house prices rocket and personal borrowing get out of control, the Conservatives said yes, and only Liberal Democrats said no. When the contracts were being drawn up for new polluting runways. When our civil liberties were being torn up. When our troops were massing on the borders of Iraq. The Conservatives cheered from the sidelines, and only Liberal Democrats said no.

We are the only party that offers real change at the next election. Labour is dying on its feet. We are replacing them as the dominant force of progressive politics. We are the alternative to a hollow Conservative party that offers just an illusion of change.

Make no mistake. There is only one party that will bring real change to Britain. The Liberal Democrats.

The Challenge

The biggest challenge for the next government will be sorting out the public finances. It's a challenge neither exhausted Labour nor fake Conservatives are fit to take on. This year's deficit is likely to be one of the highest in Europe. We will borrow £175bn this year alone – £5,550 every single second. Total national debt could hit £1.2 trillion next year – £20,000 for every man, woman and child.

I'll be straight with you. There is no easy solution. There isn't a serious economist in the world who agrees with the Conservatives that, right in the grip of recession, with two and a half million unemployed, we should pull the rug out from under the economy with immediate spending cuts. But, once the economy recovers, we are going to have to control spending tightly for many years to come.

We were right, in years gone by, to campaign for new spending to help people, to support them, as children, as young adults, as parents and as pensioners. As Charles Kennedy rightly says: our commitments demonstrate generosity of spirit. And those manifestos were right for an age of plenty. Now something different is needed.

But let me make something very clear. I am not going to abandon our vision for a better Britain because money's tight. It makes me more determined. Balancing the government books isn't a maths test.

Fiscal discipline is not an end in itself. We offer discipline for a purpose. Not just austerity, but progressive austerity. Reducing the deficit, yes, but also building a fair society and a green economy. Still driven by generosity of spirit, but fit for the circumstances of the day. It's the only way to deliver real change in Britain.

That's why our approach is completely different from the two other parties'. We aren't going to salami-slice budgets like Labour and the Conservatives. Pretending that you can save billions of pounds just by using fewer paperclips and putting up the price of Parliamentary salads.

It isn't true, and everyone knows it isn't true. We know what happens when you simply squeeze budgets, across the board, until the pips squeak. We know, because we lived through it before, under the Conservatives. We remember the tumble-down classrooms, the pensioners dying on hospital trolleys, the council houses falling into total disrepair. We remember, and we say: never again.

Liberal Democrats will do things differently. Not shaving a bit off everything, but asking fundamental questions about what the government should and shouldn't be doing. Working out, openly and publicly, what works and what doesn't. So we can completely cancel the things that don't work. In order to protect, and even in some cases extend, investment that really matters. That is progressive austerity.

We've already identified big areas where substantial long-term savings can be made. Reducing the bureaucracy of Labour's centralised state, databases and agencies. Cutting the cost of politics - changing our electoral system and having 150 fewer MPs. Reforming tax credits so they go to the people who really need them. Spending less on defence procurement.

We heard yesterday Gordon Brown is considering taking one of the Trident nuclear submarines out of service. I welcome that step in the right direction. But if you want to lead nuclear disarmament around the world, you need to be more decisive. That is why we say no to the like-for-like replacement of Trident.

Some people have asked me why we've talked so much about identifying cuts. I know it doesn't feel comfortable some of the time. But we're doing it because we know that the more we save, the safer our schools and hospitals will be. And we know that if we save enough, we will still be able to include in our manifesto, despite these difficult times, some of the pledges for new investment that we hold so dear.

Because if we end the child trust fund, we can pay for smaller classes for five, six and seven year olds. If we stop the waste of money on the useless NHS IT system. We could improve maternity services so every new family gets a great start.

If we substantially reform politics, with fewer MPs, government ministers, departments and quangos, we could save billions. And we could put the money into insulating homes and improving public transport, creating thousands of new, green jobs. Building up Britain's infrastructure not our bureaucracy.

Many of these decisions will be difficult. Taking them is the price of fairness. But if we are brave enough to take them. It will be the beginning of real change in Britain.

I want to say something to teachers, doctors, nurses, police officers, social workers, in fact to everyone who works in our public services. Britain depends on people like you and the services you provide. I know these are anxious times for you.

Everyone is talking about cuts. But neither Labour nor the Conservatives has come clean about what that means for you. They're not treating you like grown-ups. I want to work with you, hand in glove, to agree the way forward on pensions and on pay.

On pensions. Of course, we will guarantee every penny of entitlements you've already built up. But we do need to have a proper, independent review of what's fair, not just for public sector workers, but also for the taxpayers who pay your salaries. Let me reassure you: my particular focus will always be on the gold-plated pensions enjoyed by senior civil servants, quangocrats, judges – and MPs. At a time of pressure for everyone, it's only right for those with the broadest shoulders to take the greatest weight.



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Next: pay. We will never go back on an existing pay deal. That would be a betrayal. But in future, we need to work together to agree strict, disciplined limits. Again, I believe people with the most generous salaries should take the brunt of cuts so their lower-paid colleagues don't have to. But if it comes down to discipline on pay or mass redundancies. I think we all agree: protecting jobs must come first.

Young people are bearing too much of the burden of this recession. Imagine how it must feel to have slogged your way through school, college or university, maybe racking up thousands of pounds in debt, only to find there isn't a job, any job, at the other end. This is supposed to be one of the most hopeful, optimistic moments in your life.

Imagine sitting at home day after day, no money, nothing to do but wait for your fortnightly appointment at the JobCentre. We used to worry about getting our children onto the property ladder. Now we have to worry whether they'll ever get a job. There can be nothing more dispiriting at this formative moment. It destroys your self-confidence, perhaps for good.

I want to say, to young people. I am sorry. I am sorry that you have been, already, let down so many times. I am sorry that you will spend your working lives burdened by the debts of a previous generation.

But sorry isn't good enough. Our job isn't to feel bad about problems, it's to fix them. My commitment to the next generation is simple. The Liberal Democrats will not fail you.

A New Promise

So today we make a new promise to young people that they will not be unemployed for longer than 90 days before we find them work or training. Let me spell out what that would mean: If you lost your job today, we'd find you work, training, or a paid internship by Christmas. Right now, we would cancel Labour's VAT cut and use the money to invest in young people's futures.

We would pay for 10,000 more university places and 50,000 more college places this year. And we would introduce a new 'Paid Internship' scheme to give people real job experience. With an allowance of £55 a week. Young people would get experience that could make all the difference when it comes to looking for a job.

And you know. We could pay for 800,000 placements. for 800,000 young people. For the cost of just one weekend's VAT cut. If it's between 15p off a cinema ticket and a decent future. I know what we should choose.

I have always believed that you can't make progress as a society unless every generation tries to do better for its children. That's an idea that's at the core of Liberal Democrat values. Providing opportunity for our children, even as we provide dignity and security in retirement and old age.

To build a fair society, you have to start with children. And you have to start young. In Britain today, a poor, bright child will be overtaken by a less intelligent, but wealthier child by the time he is seven. This has to change. The first few years are the most important in determining a child's future. Those first few years when their character, their personality are being shaped.

The first few years are the most important ones. That's why we've always said: scrap the Child Trust Fund, which gives people a cash handout on their 18th birthday. And invest the money when it can really make a difference. With classes of just 15 for five, six and seven year olds. The beginning of real change in Britain.

If you want to know how fair a society is. Look at its tax system. Britain's is painfully unfair. The poorest pay a bigger slice of their income than the richest. Polluters are allowed to get away with harming our environment without paying for the clean-up. And we lose as much as £40 billion a year to tax dodgers.

That's why the Liberal Democrats are going to reinvent the tax system to make it fair. Not changing the amount we raise, but changing who pays.

We will raise the income tax threshold to £10,000, funded by closing loopholes that the wealthy exploit. And by making sure polluters pay for the damage they cause. I'll be honest. If you've got a house worth over a million pounds. If you fly trans-Atlantic a couple of times a month. If you get a seven-figure bonus paid in share options to get round income tax. You will pay more.

That is what is fair. Why on earth should you get tax subsidies paid for by people whose salaries are just a tiny fraction of yours? I don't want to penalise people who work hard. If you can make it big: all credit to you. But what it should win you is respect, not exemption from your tax bill.

In exactly the same way as on public spending. Many of these decisions on tax will be difficult. Taking them is the price of fairness. If we are brave enough to take them. It will be the beginning of real change in Britain.

So if there's one policy you take away from this conference. One policy to mention on every doorstep, in every phone call, in every leaflet. Let it be this one – we will deliver fair taxes.

Under a Liberal Democrat government, people will not pay a single penny of tax on the first £10,000 they earn. Millions of people will find themselves with an extra £700 in their pocket, and up to four million low earners and pensioners will pay no income tax at all. The beginning of real change in Britain.

After the expenses scandal, people are crying out, rightly, for something different at Westminster. Labour and the Conservatives have betrayed them. They offered warm rhetoric about change when the scandal was at its height. And then did nothing. They will defend the status quo to the last breath.

Only the Liberal Democrats will clean up Westminster, reform expenses, end big donations and elect the Lords. Only the Liberal Democrats will give people the right to sack MPs who are found guilty of serious wrongdoing. And only the Liberal Democrats will secure, once and for all, fair votes for everyone.

That means radical electoral reform, argued for from first principles. Not just some minor tinkering, put forward by a dying Labour government as a last, desperate attempt to save its skin.

We must do away with safe seats. Did you know, nearly half of Britain's constituencies have elected the same party in every election since I was born? These are seats where you could put a red or blue rosette on the back end of a donkey and it would still win. Only when every MP has to do a decent job and win the trust of the people they represent will we ever clean up politics for good. It will be the beginning of real change in Britain.

Imagine a Liberal Democrat Cabinet

Imagine a Liberal Democrat cabinet. Maybe the odd heated meeting. But imagine Liberal Democrats at work.

Dr Vince Cable, of course, in his office at the Treasury. Ushering in fairer taxes. Cutting the banks down to size. Tearing up the Treasury red tape that strangles local government. And that's all between breakfast and lunch before he rattles off another book for the day.

I tell you, when it comes to bankers' bonuses, I can't think of anyone better to send into the negotiating room. You think Vince would listen to those reckless bankers demanding their millions? He'd say what we all believe: There will be no bonuses for failure, not today, not tomorrow, not ever again.

Then there'd be David Laws at the schools department, hunting down all those boxes and boxes of bureaucratic rules and paperwork that get in teachers' way, and throwing them out. I mean, recycling them. And if the

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civil servants say the pupil premium is too complicated; they can't work out how to invest the extra money to the benefit of the most deprived children. You know David will do the maths himself.

Chris Huhne at the Home Office. Restoring the civil liberties so shamefully discarded by this Labour Government on his first day with a Freedom Bill. Cancelling ID cards to help fund 10,000 more police on the streets. You know Chris won't be put off by technocrats saying it can't be done. He'll produce volumes of statistics showing he's right and look sternly over his glasses until they cave in.

Norman Lamb reinventing our NHS for modern times, giving communities and patients a real say. Professor Steve Webb getting to work at the crack of dawn to improve pensions for women. Sarah Teather and Norman Baker, building Britain's infrastructure – the homes we need and the public transport we deserve. Julia Goldsworthy, devolving so much power to local communities she finds she can halve the size of her department.

And, Simon Hughes, taking charge of environment and energy policy. This is a man who's faced death threats to bring a killer to justice. Who's been involved in every environmental campaign you can think of since the 1980s. He isn't going to listen to vested interests who say 'it's too difficult'. He'd set our course for the zero carbon future we need. The beginning of real change in Britain.

The Beginning of Real Change for Britain

Climate change is the greatest challenge of our age, no doubt about it. But it's also, very much, a challenge of our age. Like so many of the problems governments have to deal with. From financial regulation to terrorism and internet crime – it crosses borders.

You can't stop the weather at the cliffs of Dover. That's why the big deals, the ones that matter, are struck at international forums – like Copenhagen this December. A summit that must, must agree an international plan of action to keep global warming not just below 2 degrees, but below 1.7 degrees. Because that's what the best science tells us is now needed to prevent catastrophic climate change.

Who do you want representing Britain at a crucial summit like that? Labour? They have let us down internationally. It wasn't just Iraq. It was their disregard for European colleagues, refusing to attend summits, grandstanding about how superior they were. It was their disregard for international law. Their backroom deals with Saudi Arabia over BAE, with Libya over Lockerbie, with America over torture. Labour has undermined Britain in the world.

But what's the alternative? William Hague? David Cameron and William Hague think the nineteenth century state still makes sense in a twenty-first century world. They simply do not understand that in an age of globalisation power must be exercised by nations together, not squandered by nations going it alone.

William Hague gives speeches about the enduring importance of the English speaking world. When everyone knows the new power centres are China, India and Brazil. A Cameron-Hague foreign policy would be the most insular and self defeating in modern times. How much influence would they have in Berlin, in Paris, in Brussels? Not a gram. Or even an ounce. And because they wouldn't stand tall in Europe, they would count for little in Washington too.

But there is a third option. Imagine Liberal Democrats around the negotiating table.

Ed Davey, our outstanding shadow foreign secretary. Drawing on the wisdom of Shirley Williams. Paddy Ashdown. Ming Campbell. We would secure Britain a stronger role in the world. By putting us at the heart of the European Union and committing us to abide fully by international law.

The beginning of real change for Britain.

Go with Your Instincts: Vote Liberal Democrat

You know, before I went into politics I managed development aid projects in Central Asia. I led negotiating teams on international trade deals with China and Russia. I worked on new rules to help create the largest single market in the world, here in Europe. I've seen how different things could be if Britain would only play its cards right.

I know there are people who agree with a lot of what we've got to say. But who still don't vote Liberal Democrat. You don't think we're contenders. I urge you to think again.

If you don't agree with our policies. If you don't want big change in Britain. Then don't vote for us. But if you like what you hear. If you share our vision for a different kind of future. Then go with your instincts; vote Liberal Democrat.

Elections are decided by your cross on the ballot paper. Power is not any party's to be inherited. Power is yours to give to whoever you choose.

So don't turn away, don't stay at home, don't vote Conservative just because you think it's the only option. This is Britain. We don't settle for second best because we think it's inevitable. We don't compromise on our beliefs because people might not agree with us. We stand up for our values with our heads held high.

So when you enter that polling booth, choose the future you really want.

Make no mistake: the Liberal Democrats will do things differently in Britain. But if you want real change in Britain, you have to take a stand. If you want what we propose, you have to vote for it.

If you want tax cuts for ordinary people, paid for by closing loopholes for the very rich. If you want the right to sack your MP if they're proved corrupt. If you want children to start out at school in classes of just 15. Then vote for it.

If you want our prisons to work, so there's less crime. If you want a lasting job in a new, green economy. If you want Britain to stand tall again in the world. Then vote for it. This is a vital moment in the history of our country. And you have the power to shape it.

Labour is lost. They haven't the ideas, energy or vision to start again. If you voted for them in the past, you have a choice. You can give away your vote to a fringe party. You can stay at home in despair. Or you can join with the Liberal Democrats and make the difference.

If you supported Labour in 1997 because you wanted fairness. You wanted young people to flourish. You wanted political reform. You wanted the environment protected. Or you simply believed in a better future. Turn to the Liberal Democrats. We carry the torch of progress now.

The choice at the next election is fake change from the Conservatives. Or real change from the Liberal Democrats. At a time like this.

A time of real crisis. Britain cannot afford to be taken in by David Cameron's illusion of change. Britain needs leadership from a party with real passion, and it's the Liberal Democrats.

There is hope for a different future, a different way of doing things in Britain, if we are brave enough to make a fresh start. So let today be the first day of the future of British politics. It may be only the beginning. But it is the beginning. The beginning of real change in Britain.

If you want things to be different, really different, choose the party that is different.

Choose the Liberal Democrats!

Nick Clegg MP
Leader of the Liberal Democrats



Policy Motions passed at conference

A Fresh Start for Britain: Choosing a Different, Better Future

Conference believes that Britain is facing a crisis in which:

- i) The economy is in a mess.
- ii) The gap between rich and poor keeps growing.
- iii) Dangerous climate change and environmental degradation threaten everyone.
- iv) The political system is rotten.

Conference further believes that:

- A. Labour and the Conservatives have had decades to get things right but chose to look the other way while bankers gambled with people's jobs and savings, and too many politicians forgot that they should serve the country, not themselves.
- B. The only hope for a different way of doing things in Britain is the Liberal Democrats.

Given the economic circumstances and uncertainty about the state of public finances, conference recognises that:

- I. The only certainty is that the next government will have to make very hard choices about spending – cuts will be necessary to deliver any priorities.
- II. Any new spending should be paid for by a specific cut made elsewhere, to ensure it is deliverable even in these tough economic times – this means that we will not increase public spending overall.
- III. The tax cuts we propose to help those on low and middle incomes will not be funded by cuts in services, but by making taxes fairer and greener, so that the richest pay their fair share and polluters pay for the damage they cause.
- IV. While nobody can yet be certain what the country can afford, we can be certain about the values and principles that will guide us in the tough choices that lie ahead – the British people can be certain that any hard choices made by Liberal Democrats will be firmly guided by our values, unlike Labour or Conservatives.

Conference therefore endorses policy paper 94, *A Fresh Start for Britain: Choosing a Different, Better Future*, noting that despite reports, the document neither abandons nor downgrades any existing policy commitments and that the process of prioritising policy commitments will only be carried out in the preparation of the general election manifesto. Conference in particular welcomes the priorities it sets out for the development of our next general election manifesto:

1. Creating a sustainable economy – we will be honest about what the country can afford, and change the system to create a stable economy that keeps people in work, protects and enhances our environment and ensures the mistakes that caused the recession don't happen again. That means:
 - a) Putting Britain back to work and fighting climate change through investment in green economic growth to create jobs, renewable energy, affordable homes and green infrastructure.
 - b) A totally new approach to banking, so that excessive risk taking by bankers doesn't jeopardise the whole economy again; we will split up the biggest banks, so that high-risk casino banking does not put ordinary people's savings at risk.
2. Building a fair society – we will empower every individual and community, fighting disadvantage and entrenched inequality. That means:
 - a) Fairer taxes to lift the burden on ordinary people and make sure the richest pay their fair share; we have already set out plans to reduce taxes on hard-pressed low and middle income people, raising the Income Tax threshold so that no one pays tax on the first £10,000 of their income and over four million more of the poorest people will pay no tax at all, paid for by closing unfair loopholes that increase the gap between rich and poor.

- b) Giving every child the very best start in life – we want to invest in support for children and young people so that the next generation doesn't pay the price for mistakes made today; action in the earliest years, like our plan to cut class sizes, is critical to tackling the entrenched disadvantage, which takes root in early childhood, that so disfigures Britain and we will support an extended youth service and activities, apprenticeships and training for young people between 14 and 21.
3. Cleaning up politics – we will promote openness, decentralisation, accessibility and accountability, so that politicians really listen to people, understand and act. That means:
 - a) Cleaning up Westminster by reforming expenses, ending big donations, electing the House of Lords, cutting the power of Ministers, reducing the number of MPs, and giving local people the right to sack any MP found guilty of serious wrongdoing.
 - b) Delivering the radical shake-up that the British people demand, by making sure every vote counts so that safe seats are a thing of the past and MPs are forced to listen to the people they represent.

Applicability: Federal, except 2 b) which is England only.

This motion and the accompanying paper build on the vision and values paper Make It Happen (2008) and set out the party's key objectives and priorities for developing the next general election manifesto.

Conference voted to accept an amendment to insert, in the paragraph beginning 'Conference therefore endorses...', the words: 'noting that despite reports, ... in the preparation of the general election manifesto'

Conference voted to accept amendments to insert in 2 a): 'we have already set out plans ... the poorest people will pay no tax at all'; and in 2 b): 'and we will support an extended youth service and activities, apprenticeships and training for young people between 14 and 21'.

Afghanistan and Pakistan Conflict

Conference expresses:

- I. Extreme concern and deep sorrow over the rise in the number of British soldiers killed and wounded in Afghanistan, mixed with our admiration and gratitude to Britain's armed forces for their sacrifices and bravery; remembering too the military & civilian personnel and their families from other allied countries who have lost their lives
- II. Our sympathies to the families of those civilians killed in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and deep disquiet over increasing civilian deaths caused by aerial attacks - which can further consolidate support for insurgent forces within Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Conference notes:

- i) The shifting military and political objectives of the Western forces in Afghanistan since 2001.
- ii) The extreme centralisation of, and corruption within, the Afghan government - who notwithstanding have full control over only a minority of the territory of the country.
- iii) That more than half Afghan GDP is now related to the illegal narcotics business, the result of which is that UK streets are now flooded with cheap heroin, causing deaths which are set to exceed 1000 this year.
- iv) A decline in living conditions since 2001 and a recent deterioration in the legal position of women.
- v) The 'conflict-facilitating lawlessness' across the border in the Pakistani tribal areas, where the Pakistani constitution does not fully apply.
- vi) That public confidence in the recent elections was seriously undermined by widespread fraud.

Conference believes:

- A. The primary and urgent security aim now should be to stop the killing on all sides, and put an end to the 30 years of continuous war which

Policy Motions passed at conference continued

- have created poverty, chaos and militancy.
- B. That the path to a positive end to the conflict lies in the orchestration of a regional peace agreement which takes into account the security and economic concerns of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and India and other countries involved or affected, under a UN framework.
- C. Progress towards peace should not depend on 'gaining the upper hand militarily' - since such a condition is hard to define, it will delay a peace settlement, and it effectively puts the potential for political progress in the hands of military forces.

Conference welcomes the decision by the United States under President Obama, to adopt a new approach, the assessment by the new Commander of US and NATO forces in Afghanistan, General Stanley McChrystal, that a new 'Western' strategy is needed, and the call for a regional peace agreement from US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton.

Conference therefore calls for:

1. An end to the killing and to 30 years of war in Afghanistan, and the start of a regional peace process, not contingent on 'Western' forces 'having the upper hand militarily' - and the pursuit of a ceasefire, leading to a political and constitutional settlement within Afghanistan.
2. The UK government to press the US government to end its 'military first' approach, and shift priority to the economic, political and social development of Afghanistan.
3. The necessary inclusion in the work towards a peace process of three key elements:
 - a) A properly financed decentralised government.
 - b) Support for the Pakistani government's desire to extend its constitution into tribal areas.
 - c) Steps to develop economic cooperation and trade in the region with all countries neighbouring Afghanistan.
4. In particular, the UK Government to:
 - a) Focus on concluding the Afghanistan mission and to report to Parliament in detail on progress towards a withdrawal.
 - b) Present to Parliament on its return a series of public 'mission tests' that set out progress towards key security and governance goals, and progress with allies in steps to peace, against which Ministers can be held to account.

Applicability: Federal.

This motion substantially updates policy on the conflict in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Previous policy is outlined in policy paper 86, Security and Liberty in a Globalised World (2008), and in conference motion Combating Terrorism (2003).

Are We Being Served? (Consumer Policy Paper)

Conference notes that:

- A. In people's daily lives everyone depends on buying goods and obtaining services from both the private and the public sectors.
- B. Labour and Tory governments alike have presided over a steady move in recent decades towards larger, more centralised and less responsive organisations.
- C. Although IT has brought great benefits in efficiency, it has led big organisations to be increasingly impersonal and remote - the so-called 'Faceless Britain'.
- D. The people hit hardest by these developments have been those most in need - the elderly, those in poverty and those on benefits.

Conference believes that:

- i) Everyone should be able to buy the goods and obtain the services they need easily, efficiently and on fair terms.

- ii) The fundamental entitlement to an honest and straightforward approach and a high quality of service is the same for services provided in the public sector as for goods and services purchased in the private sector.
- iii) Open, liberal and competitive markets, both national and local, properly regulated, lead to greater choice, diversity and general prosperity and help maintain fairness.

Conference therefore endorses policy paper 95, *Are We Being Served?*, as a statement of the party's key policies for people accessing goods and services. Conference particularly welcomes its proposals to:

1. Introduce a new Universal Service Code, which will:
 - a) Secure for the public a quality of service that complies with the principles of responsiveness, informed choice, consumer protection and effective redress.
 - b) Be mandatory in the public sector and for all businesses seeking major contracts with or franchises from local or national government.
 - c) Be encouraged throughout the private sector, with larger companies having an obligation to report upon their compliance with the Code.
2. Introduce a general duty to trade fairly, enforceable by individuals as a private right as well as by the relevant authorities in case of infringement.
3. 'Get the market right' by taking steps to ensure that competition is improved and that local competition is promoted, including:
 - a) Establishing a local competition office within the Office of Fair Trading for the promotion of local and regional competition.
 - b) Introducing a compulsory 'local competition' test for all planning applications for new retail developments and requiring that they show beneficial effects.
 - c) Requiring developers to indemnify local authorities against the costs of any substantial appeal against planning permission.
 - d) Changing the way lucrative public contracts are allocated to encourage smaller and more local businesses to fulfil them.
4. Ensure people are able to make informed choices, by:
 - a) Requiring appropriate products to be sold with the key information highlighted at the time of supply in clear summary boxes to assist comparison.
 - b) Working through the Energy Saving Trust and the Carbon Trust (which we will merge into one organisation) to improve and streamline environmental labelling.
 - c) Improving the quality of information made available to the public about the financial consequences of transactions.
 - d) Obliging suppliers to provide all clients and customers with a brief summary of their key statutory rights.
 - e) Requiring large companies to produce an audited Social Responsibility Report on their compliance with the Universal Code and the duty to trade fairly, their corporate social responsibility and their environmental record.
5. Make sure people are further protected from unfair and unscrupulous commercial practices and from fraud, by:
 - a) Making it compulsory for companies taking substantial deposits from customers or clients to hold deposit protection.
 - b) Imposing restrictions on directors of companies which go into liquidation leaving customers who have made advance payments unprotected.
 - c) Establishing a public warning system on fraudulent activity here and abroad.
 - d) Taking specific action to protect children as vulnerable consumers.

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6. Make redress and enforcement more streamlined and accessible, by:
 - a) Introducing an umbrella ombudsman service to harmonise ombudsman services and make them more accessible and more generally available.
 - b) Encouraging and promoting the use of Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) as an alternative to court.
 - c) Increasing the resourcing of the Trading Standards Service and broadening their role to enable them to take up more individual complaints against traders.
 - d) Enabling Citizens Advice to provide advisers at courts on a regular basis to help people, particularly with small claims.
7. Provide the most appropriate statutory environment: by taking responsibility for representing the interests of consumers out of the hands of Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (DBIS) and moving the Minister for Consumer Affairs from DBIS to an independent cross-cutting senior ministerial post, entitled to attend cabinet on relevant matters, to champion the interests of people accessing goods and services in both the public and the private sectors.

Applicability: Federal, except 1 b), 3 d) and 6 which are Federal or England only depending on the particular service affected, and 3 b) and c) which are England only.

This motion and the accompanying policy paper create new policy on consumer protection. In particular, the motion calls for the creation of a Universal Service Code; a universal duty to trade fairly; the creation of an umbrella ombudsman scheme; and the creation of a local competition office within the OFT.

Conference voted to accept an amendment to insert 6 b). However conference voted to delete wording in the amendment which would have added at the end of 6 b): ‘; where ADR is used, the scheme should be approved by the ombudsman and be subject to testing for its independence, impartiality and fairness, and the cost of ADR and ombudsman approval should be borne by the firm or industry’.

Child Protection

Conference notes with concern that:

- i) There is not enough public awareness of the extent to which child abuse and neglect occurs in the UK, or of what can be done to help resolve it.
- ii) The current child protection system is unfair on children and families, as there are huge variations in the thresholds for starting care proceedings and children often have no means of making other professionals aware of their own feelings and opinions.
- iii) Despite significant restructuring of children’s services, communication between key child protection agencies has remained poor and resulted in mistakes being made which put children’s lives at risk.
- iv) The Government has failed to deal effectively with the problems faced by social workers, which has meant that 10% of all social worker posts in the UK remain unfilled; social workers are spending more time filling in forms than working with children and families; and many social workers are not well trained enough to deal with the complexities of child protection.

Conference believes that:

- a) Children live and grow up in communities, which is why child protection is the responsibility of everybody and should not just be left to professionals.
- b) Child abuse and neglect can be reduced significantly through education and support for those families in need of help.
- c) Children have the right to have their feelings and opinions heard and acted upon, particularly when decisions are being made about their futures.
- d) Inter-agency work is crucial if any significant progress and cultural

- e) change is to be made in the field of child protection.
- e) Much of the excellent and challenging work done by social workers often goes un-recognised.
- f) A comprehensive health visitor service would strengthen the chance of the most disadvantaged children developing satisfactorily physically, emotionally and socially.

Conference notes the Spokesperson’s paper *Protecting Children* and in particular endorses its proposals to:

1. Make child protection everybody’s responsibility by running a government-led communications campaign highlighting the prevalence of child abuse and by providing routes for people to report their concerns.
2. Work to ensure that all members of the children’s workforce have child protection training.
3. Help families to become more resilient under pressure by offering them support, including an entitlement to parenting classes through children’s centres to all parents taking up the pre-school childcare entitlement proposed in policy paper 88, *The Best Start for Children, The Best Deal for Families*.
4. Publish as much as possible of a Serious Case Review in an anonymised form in order to make the child protection system more transparent and ensure that lessons are learnt.
5. Scrap the ContactPoint Database and use the savings to offer additional administrative and technical support to social workers.
6. Recognise the important role which housing associations and ALMOs play in child protection and place on them a statutory duty to co-operate with children’s trusts in safeguarding matters.
7. Work to ensure that all children have the right to an advocate so that their voice is heard.
8. Improve multi-disciplinary training by making secondments between different agencies a mandatory part of social workers’ continuous professional development.
9. Bring about long-term changes to the status and training of social workers, noting the positive experiences of the teachers’ workforce.
10. Set up an expert body to consider thresholds for taking children into care that will assist Local Safeguarding Children Boards to develop protocols on their local application in the light of their circumstances.

Applicability: England only.

This motion creates new policy on child protection, building on policies outlined in policy paper 72, Stronger Families, Brighter Futures (2006), and policy paper 60, Promoting Independence, Protecting Individuals (2003).

Conference voted to accept amendments to insert f) and to insert at the end of 10: ‘that will assist Local Safeguarding Children Boards to develop protocols on their local application in the light of their circumstances’.

Decent Housing

Conference notes the decision by Government to take funding promised to council tenants across England to pay for investment in their homes to bring them up to Decent Homes standards, and divert it into the Building Britain’s Future programme of new house building in the run-up to the general election.

Conference further notes that council tenants across the country are subsidising the Treasury to the tune of hundreds of millions of pounds every year without benefiting from much-needed investment in council home repairs and maintenance.

Conference condemns the Government’s betrayal of council tenants who have already suffered decades of underinvestment in housing by successive Conservative Governments.

Conference therefore calls on the government to:

1. Reverse the decision to abandon the 5% of the population whose housing is still not up to Decent Homes standards.

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2. Make a firm commitment to deliver the funding promised to Arms Length Management Organisations (ALMO) which meet the 2 star rating set by the Audit Commission.
3. Ensure that the current Housing Revenue Account review allows the tenants and local authorities to have more control over the reinvestment of local council rents.

Conference adds that this is the latest example of Labour's unfair policy on social housing investment and condemns the Government's ideological opposition to direct and accountable local authority management of council housing, which has led to tenants being deprived of any Decent Homes investment because they have not voted in support of an ALMO or stock transfer.

Applicability: England only.

This motion develops new policy to tackle the problems of underinvestment in social housing. Previous policy is set out in conference motion Homes for All (2008).

Demanding the Truth on Torture

Conference notes that:

- A. Despite pressure from MPs, campaign groups and the media, the Government refuses to set up a full public inquiry into allegations that the UK Government had a policy between 2002 and 2005 that permitted British Intelligence Services to act in ways that may have given rise to complicity in torture and illegal abduction.
- B. Compelling evidence exists to show that former Prime Minister Tony Blair, amongst others, was fully aware of the policy guidance that led to potential acts of complicity in torture.
- C. The Government not only opposes a full inquiry, but has deliberately and persistently prevented the publication of materials that may provide evidence of torture, and that it has done so to avoid its own censure and embarrassment and not for reasons of national security.
- D. The allegations include:
 - i) The systematic receipt and use of intelligence that the Intelligence Services knew was obtained through torture.
 - ii) The involvement of MI5 agents in the questioning of detainees – both directly and indirectly (with the provision of information and the suggestion of possible questions) – who it was known by British Intelligence were subject to torture or degrading treatment by foreign government agents.
 - iii) The illegal holding of detainees in British territorial waters off Diego Garcia in the British Indian Ocean Territory.
 - iv) The handing over by British forces to US authorities of Iraqi detainees, who were subsequently illegally rendered to Afghanistan, where it is alleged detainees have been subject to torture or degrading treatment in US detention facilities.
- E. Britain has legal commitments that demand that it will not be complicit with acts of torture or illegal abduction under the 1949 Geneva Conventions, the UN Convention Against Torture (Article 4) and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court.

Conference believes that:

- a) The use of torture is morally abhorrent, illegal and an ineffective means of gathering intelligence and evidence, and condemns direct or indirect collusion in its use in all circumstances.
- b) British security interests will only be served by protecting and upholding fundamental human rights and the rule of law.
- c) All those who authorise, practice, or collude in torture should, where possible, be brought to justice in accordance with the requirements of national and international laws.

Conference calls for:

1. A full and independent public inquiry into the facts relating to the involvement or knowledge of the British Government on matters relating to torture, extraordinary rendition and the illegal transfer of detainees to foreign jurisdictions in the period between 11 September 2001 and 20 January 2009.
2. The Government to provide the inquiry with full details on each and every policy it has adopted over the last 20 years as to how British officials should act in circumstances in which it may be suspected or is known that officials of third countries are acting in violation of the prohibition against torture in circumstances that may cause British officials to be put in danger of being complicit in torture.
3. The immediate release of the summary of the 42 intelligence documents relating to the treatment of Binyam Mohammed, as referred to in the High Court ruling of 4th February 2009.
4. Tony Blair not to be supported by any British or EU Government for the post of President of the European Council, as it would be wholly inappropriate for him to occupy such a position before an inquiry has established his role in the formulation of British policy on torture.
5. The Government to renegotiate the terms of its agreement with the United States over the use of the island of Diego Garcia to include full respect for fundamental human rights and a complete accounting of the circumstances in which the base on that island was used in relation to internationally prohibited acts.

Conference welcomes the work of European parliamentarians, both MEPs and members of the parliamentary assembly of the Council of Europe, in highlighting the apparent complicity of up to a dozen European states in illegal abduction, rendition, imprisonment and torture, and demands a full accounting of their role which seeks to avoid any future similar lapse in European human rights and rule of law standards and resultant breach of the EU treaty and European Convention of Human Rights.

Applicability: Federal.

This motion develops policy on the use of torture, building on previous policy as set out in conference motion Extraordinary Rendition (2008).

Conference voted to accept an amendment to add the final paragraph beginning 'Conference welcomes the work ...'.

Development in a Downturn

Conference reiterates its long-standing commitment to international development and recalls the party's lead on this issue.

Conference notes the global financial crisis and recession and the unprecedented response from Western governments, but remains particularly concerned that this global emergency will have potentially devastating consequences for the world's most vulnerable people and fragile states.

Conference further notes the food and oil price crises of last year which forced 150 million people in the developing world back into extreme poverty and is alarmed that the current global downturn will trap another 90 million people in poverty.

Conference recalls the pledges made by the G8 at the 2005 Gleneagles summit to increase aid levels by \$50bn per year by 2010 (including to Africa by \$25bn) and deeply regrets the failure to honour these pledges in years of sustained global economic growth. Conference believes that in a time of economic downturn concerted action to fulfil these outstanding pledges is now essential to prevent a dramatic reversal of progress towards the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Conference reaffirms its commitment to internationalism and multilateralism and believes that the G8 and G20 have a particularly crucial role in tackling the global impact of the economic crisis.

Conference notes the action agreed in the communiqué of the G20 summit

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in London, but also notes the World Bank's Global Development Finance 2009 report which highlights that despite these measures the developing world is set to lose \$1 trillion this year.

Recalling the Liberal Democrat spokesperson's paper *Development in a Downturn; Dealing with the Global Emergency*, Conference calls for further action to assist the developing world through this economic crisis with the establishment of a 'G20 compact' charged with:

1. Delivering on previous aid promises, including:
 - a) A 'Gleneagles Recovery Plan' to realise the pledges to increase official development assistance to Africa by \$25bn and in total by \$50bn per year by 2010.
 - b) A 'Route 0.7' which sets out in detail how each G8 nation will achieve the UN target of 0.7% of gross national income on development assistance.
 - c) Reform of the World Bank, with an explicit mandate to deliver the MDGs.
2. Reforming the international financial architecture, and rejuvenating the private sector, including:
 - a) A 'Green New Deal' to put the environment at the heart of the world's economic recovery and assist developing countries with climate change adaptation and mitigation.
 - b) A 'Remittances Taskforce' to dramatically reduce the charges applied to personal remittances and to promote the development of financial infrastructure.
 - c) Strengthening the Financial Action Task Force on Money Laundering and establishing a Standing Committee on Tax Evasion to tackle illicit capital flight from developing countries and to take action against tax havens.
 - d) Initiating measures in the UK to prevent the actions of so-called 'vulture funds', and working with partners in the EU and USA to establish similar measures.
3. Strengthening the social safety net, including:
 - a) A 'Global Fund for Social Protection' to assist and advise on the development of national welfare schemes.
 - b) A new funding mechanism for the World Food Programme to enhance its ability to respond to changing food security trends and decrease its reliance on emergency funding appeals.

Beyond this Compact, Conference further calls on the international community to conclude the Doha development round as a matter of urgency and to conclude a substantive agreement at the Copenhagen climate change summit, including a significant financial package to support developing country adaptation.

Conference also notes that rapid increases in the price of food can aggravate poverty and political instability and increase the pressures to migrate. Conference therefore calls on the EU to join with other interested countries to establish a supranational system of reserve food stocks

Applicability: Federal.

This motion further develops policy on international development. In particular it creates new policy on a 'Gleneagles Recovery Plan', a 'Global Fund for Social Protection', reform of the World Bank and the World Food Programme and the creation of a Standing Committee on Tax Evasion.

Previous policy is set out in policy paper 87, Shaping Our World Through a Strong Europe (September 2008), policy paper 82, Zero-Carbon Britain – Taking a Global Lead (2007), and policy paper 65, Wealth for the World (2004), and in conference motions Review of Millennium Development Goals (September 2005) and World Summit on Sustainable Development (September 2002).

Conference voted to accept an amendment to add the last paragraph

beginning: 'Conference also notes that rapid increases ...'

Energy and Climate Change

Conference believes:

- A. Britain, Europe and the world need to develop a new sustainable economy, based on clean, renewable energy and the efficient use of energy and resources and reduced dependence on fossil fuels, to drive economic recovery, create thousands of jobs and help secure Europe's future energy supplies.
- B. Any new global framework for mitigating and adapting to climate change must be effective, just and realistic, with industrial countries taking responsibility for their historic emissions.
- C. The active participation and commitment of Brazil, China, India and the USA is crucial to any successful agreement or a replacement for the Kyoto Protocol at this year's United Nations Climate Change Conference in Copenhagen.
- D. Any new international agreements must be based on the best scientific evidence, and this indicates that climate change is happening faster and more aggressively than previously estimated; and that to avoid catastrophic climate change, average global temperature needs to increase by no more than 1.7° C, corresponding to atmospheric concentration of CO₂ of no more than 350 parts per million.
- E. Responsibility for the delivery of international targets must come at local, regional and national levels, and the UK must set an example in tackling climate change by raising its emissions reduction target for 2020 from 34% below 1990 levels to 40% below.
- F. Given the existing massive world-wide reserves of coal, the development of clean coal technologies is vital to the task of reducing global emissions.

Conference therefore calls for:

1. A global agreement at Copenhagen to:
 - a) Ensure that greenhouse gas emissions peak no later than 2015.
 - b) Commit industrial countries to reduce their emissions by 40% over 1990 levels by 2020 and to phase out fossil fuel and industrial greenhouse gas emissions by 2050 with at least 75% of these cuts being achieved domestically.
 - c) Secure at least a 75% reduction in global emissions from deforestation by 2020, and the halving of the carbon intensity of global food production by 2050.
 - d) Provide finance for adaptation in developing countries additional to the existing commitment by developed countries to spend 0.7% of gross national income on international development.
 - e) Commit developed countries to contribute \$160 billion in each year of the period 2013–2017 to assist with mitigation and adaptation measures in developing countries and for this contribution to be deposited with the United Nations.
 - f) Implement the following policy instruments:
 - i) A Leapfrog Fund to facilitate the development of low-carbon technologies, energy efficiency and renewable energy in developing countries, together with the reform of patent rules.
 - ii) A United Nations Adaptation Fund to provide grants for communities vulnerable to the impact of climate change without increasing the burden on indebted countries.
 - iii) A multilateral insurance mechanism available for developing countries which implement risk reduction under the Adaptation Fund, designed to cover climate-related risks or disaster losses.
 - iv) A fund to prevent deforestation and promote biodiversity, fully respecting the rights of local and indigenous peoples and consistent with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
 - g) Establish all its funds and mechanisms as the responsibility of the

Policy Motions passed at conference continued

United Nations, to be run in an open and transparent manner with an equitable decision-making process between developed and developing countries.

2. Action at EU level, including:

- a) Incisive political leadership in the global negotiations by the EU institutions.
- b) The ALDE Group and ELDR party galvanising European and national parliamentarians to raise public awareness of the critical importance of the Copenhagen outcome.
- c) EU targets for renewable energy and energy efficiency beyond 2020, including specific targets for 2030 and 2050, to be set within the next five years.
- d) Development of a functioning EU energy market where economies of scale, carbon reduction, cost efficiencies and fair competition improve the security of energy supply and reduce costs for consumers.
- e) Continued support for the urgent development of Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) technologies, including the rapid development of a regulatory framework, and the setting of a price of carbon high enough to encourage investment.
- f) The EU Energy Performance of Buildings Directive to include high minimum efficiency standards for building components, and a requirement for public authorities to implement the recommendations on Energy Performance Certificates within 3 years, and the removal from the Directive of the 1000m² threshold for buildings undergoing renovation.

3. Action in the UK to deliver a 40% reduction in UK greenhouse gas emissions and a 30% energy efficiency saving, relative to 1990 levels, with 40% of UK electricity to come from clean sources, by 2020, including:

- a) Development of a dynamic UK electricity grid that can better connect and integrate new, clean energy technologies, enable more active management of demand and supply fluctuations and enable the UK to promote and participate fully in a European supergrid.
- b) A minimum of 33 gigawatts (GW) of offshore energy and at least 11GW more onshore wind energy by 2020.
- c) A UK Emissions Performance Standard to ensure that new coal-fired power generation plants must use carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology, with a CCS regime phased in for all industrial emissions from 2020.
- d) New energy efficiency legislation for products, and further development of the well-understood A–G labelling scheme, using recalibration to reflect improvements in technology.
- e) A 'Warm Homes' programme coordinated nationally and delivered locally to make all UK homes energy-efficient by 2020.
- f) The merger of the Carbon and Energy Saving Trusts into a single delivery authority responsible for delivering all the UK energy and climate targets, which will provide tailored advice and support for local authorities, businesses, and the voluntary and public sectors.
- g) A Suppliers Obligation (replacing the Carbon Emissions Reduction Target) in the form of an absolute cap on total carbon emissions from household energy suppliers with an emissions reduction target of at least 50% below 1990 levels by 2020.
- h) New requirements on OFGEM to support decentralised energy and introduce a price regime which decouples corporate profit from increased energy use.
- i) Guaranteed fair prices for energy consumers to prevent people being charged relatively more for less energy used, to reduce prices for fuel-poor households and to offer fewer tariffs, all of which must be simple to understand and easy to compare.
- j) Mandatory carbon reporting on investments for all businesses and banks and an end to public money going into unconventional fuels such as tar sands.
- k) Ensuring that the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO) only permits sustainable biofuels as required by the EU 2009 Directive

on the Promotion of Renewable Energy Sources and includes a calculation taking into account the effects of indirect land use change.

- l) Support for and investment in UK-based green technology.

4. Conference applauds the launch of the 10:10 campaign, aiming to reduce UK carbon emissions by 10 per cent in 2010. Conference calls on:

- a) All local authorities run or influenced by Liberal Democrats to commit themselves to the campaign objectives.
- b) All Liberal Democrats, and all other members of the public, to make similar personal commitments.
- c) The government to make a national commitment to cut UK emissions by 10 per cent in 2010.

Applicability: Federal, except 3 e) which is England only.

This motion substantially updates and develops policy on energy and climate change. Previous policy is set out in policy paper 82, Zero Carbon Britain – Taking a Global Lead (2007).

Conference voted to accept amendments to insert F, 2 e), 3 l) and 4.

The FCC agreed to draft in a change to the wording of 3 k). The original text read:

- k) Putting the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation (RTFO) on hold until agreement can be reached in the EU to ensure that only sustainable biofuels are supported.

Conference rejected the following amendment:

After E, insert:

- F. That installed renewable energy capacity over the next 15 years is unlikely to do more than replace installed nuclear capacity, and therefore a significant reduction in the use of fossil fuels in the UK cannot be achieved without a limited programme of nuclear replacement.

After 3 b), insert:

- c) Support for a single phase of replacement of the UK's existing nuclear facilities, located on or adjacent to existing sites, where delivery of new installed capacity can be achieved by 2020.

Our Natural Heritage (Natural Environment Policy Paper)

Conference believes that:

- A. A healthy natural environment is crucial not only to quality of life but also to the sustainability of life on the planet; it provides humankind with food, clean water and clean air, employment, opportunities to improve physical and mental health and the enjoyment of beauty and tranquillity.
- B. Humans are using the planet's finite natural wealth at an ever-increasing and unsustainable rate, threatening to exhaust key resources by the middle of the century unless net consumption is curbed.
- C. The planet's delicately balanced ecosystems and the diversity of plant and animal life are crucial to humankind's future health, well-being and ultimately survival; the threat to them is as important as climate change.
- D. Public policy on the natural environment should be guided by technical and scientific evidence but also by the value placed on the natural environment by people.

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

Policy Motions passed at conference continued

Conference therefore endorses policy paper 93, *Our Natural Heritage*, as a statement of the party's key policies for protecting and enhancing biodiversity and the natural environment. Conference particularly welcomes its proposals to:

1. Introduce policies to cut net consumption and ultimately achieve zero waste to landfill by:
 - a) Giving top-tier local authorities a statutory duty to develop resource recovery plans for all types of waste in their area to maximise the recovery of useful resources and bring efficiencies of scale.
 - b) Strongly supporting the 'waste hierarchy'; making waste reduction a priority ahead of reuse, followed by household and business recycling then mechanical sorting of waste for recycling, and finally obtaining energy from residual waste.
 - c) Passing an Anti-Waste & Resource Efficiency Act to establish an independent Resource Efficiency Committee (REC) to identify the key resources being used unsustainably and recommending legally binding targets for reducing their net consumption.
 - d) Setting sustainable design standards for key products and requiring specified products to be sold with parts and labour guarantees for at least five years to ensure people benefit from products which are made to last.
2. Boosting water efficiency by:
 - a) Reforming Ofwat's remit to put water resource efficiency at the heart of water companies plans, including tougher leakage targets and fair billing that delinks corporate profit from increased water use.
 - b) Providing stronger planning guidance in favour of compulsory rainwater harvesting systems, greywater recycling, green roofs and sustainable urban drainage systems.
 - c) Introducing smart water metering in areas of water stress by 2020 to inform and support fair billing and reduce energy and water use.
3. Defend the natural environment at local level by:
 - a) Introducing landscape-scale policies, to be agreed between local authorities, with measurable objectives which could include the promotion of biodiversity, the restoration and protection of natural features such as water channels, wetlands, forests and moorlands, the reduction of flood risk, increased tranquillity, the protection of grade 1 and 2 agricultural land, the encouragement of local food production and the protection of Green Belt and green spaces of particular value to local people, including urban green spaces.
 - b) Using environmental capacity as the key guidance for identifying sites for development in the planning system.
 - c) Giving local authorities a duty to protect local biodiversity and set local targets for wildlife, using the planning system to encourage the provision of wildlife-friendly features and wildflower areas in all new developments, with a duty to promote the establishment of wildlife corridors.
 - d) Increasing the provision of urban planting and green spaces on all new developments through better use of the planning system, including increase powers for planning authorities and improved guidance to local authorities.
 - e) Extending the protection offered by the designation of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) to other natural habitats that cannot be replaced, including the small remaining areas of ancient woodland and upland moorland, or which connect areas of biodiversity and allow migration in response to climate change.
4. Ensure that everyone has access to the natural environment and that local people have control over it by:
 - a) Insisting on Natural England's Natural Green Space standards being incorporated into Local Development Frameworks to ensure accessible green space is provided for everyone.
 - b) Increasing the general right of access to the countryside, along the

- lines of the model introduced by Liberal Democrats in Scotland.
- c) Creating a new designation – similar to SSSI status – to protect green areas of particular importance or value to the community (such as green spaces close to urban populations).
- d) Reverse Labour's Planning Act to return planning decisions to local control.

5. Act on noise and light pollution, with policies to:
 - a) Improve and enforce noise pollution regulations, tackling the noisiest vehicles and planes and strengthening building regulations.
 - b) Recognise the threat of burgeoning external lighting to both wildlife and people's enjoyment of their local environment and the skies, requiring local authorities and government agencies to control and where possible reduce the impact of artificial lighting.
6. Provide proper enforcement of environmental legislation by:
 - a) Ensuring environmental crimes, including water pollution and wildlife crime, are properly enforced and the penalties truly reflect the damage done and the cost of clean-up.
 - b) Making the Environment Agency the 'buck-stops-here' body with responsibility for co-ordinating the enforcement of environmental protection regulations and with the power to direct the other bodies involved to fulfil their duties.
7. Take decisive action to protect the natural environment on the international stage, including:
 - a) Urgent development of the new system of bilateral agreements between the EU and forest-rich developing countries to reform forestry governance and exclude illegal timber products from trade.
 - b) Encouraging the use of public procurement policy throughout the EU to require legal and sustainable timber and timber products for all government contracts.
 - c) The adoption at EU level of new legislation making it illegal to import and possess timber produced illegally in foreign countries.
 - d) The adoption of minimum standards of national forestry governance as a condition for the provision of carbon financing for avoided deforestation under the climate change regime, ensuring that the money benefits forest communities and promotes sustainable forest management.
 - e) Ratification of ILO 169, recognising the rights of indigenous peoples to land rights, equality and freedom, supporting their stewardship of forests and other important lands.

Applicability: England only, except 1 c) and 7 which are Federal.

This motion and the accompanying policy paper substantially update and develop policy on the natural environment. In particular, the motion creates new policy on landscape-scale planning policies; establishing an independent Resource Efficiency Committee (REC); introducing smart water metering in areas of water stress by 2020; increasing the general right of access to the countryside and creating a new designation – similar to SSSI status – to protect green areas of particular importance or value to the community.

Previous policy on the natural environment is set out in conference motions Eco-towns (2008), Taking Action to Tackle Excess Packaging (2007), Managing the Impact and Risk of Flooding (2007), Sustainable Management of Water Resources (2006), Zero Waste (2003) and Putting The Environment at the Heart of Government (2001). The last policy papers to consider policies on the natural environment are policy paper 77, Green and Prosperous Communities – Local Regeneration for the 21st Century (2007), policy paper 55, Planning for the 21st Century (2003), and policy paper 52, Rural Futures (2002).

Conference voted to accept amendments to insert 1 b) and 3 d).

Policy Motions passed at conference continued

Conference voted to retain in 7 d) the words: 'ensuring that the money benefits forest communities and promotes sustainable forest management'.

Conference rejected an amendment that sought to insert a new 1 c):

- c) Encouraging the procurement of advanced technologies for waste treatment plants, recognising that the investment required for such plants may require contracts of over 10 years to be commercially viable, but suggesting that where practicable contracts should be written to allow the introduction of newer technologies if or when they become available.

Conference rejected an amendment that sought to insert a new 4 e):

- e) Improving representation of local communities within the governance of environmentally protected areas from SSSIs to National Parks, with a clear mandate to protect the interests and views of the local communities and general public.

Parliamentary Expenses

Conference notes:

- A. The grave effect that the expenses scandal has had on the standing of the House of Commons, the reputation of individual MPs and the conduct of democratic politics.
- B. That self-regulation of MPs expenses has failed.
- C. That the first-past-the-post electoral system, by effectively rendering some 80% of MPs unaccountable to their electors, has been a major factor in creating and underpinning the culture of arrogance which has underlain the expenses scandal.

Conference recognises that:

- i) Liberal Democrat MPs have been consistent advocates of freedom of information, leading the fight against the attempt by Labour and Conservative MPs to exempt MPs' expenses from Freedom of Information legislation.
- ii) Liberal Democrats MPs have been consistent advocates of greater transparency and reform of the system of expenses and allowances, being the only party united in voting for tighter rules and independent audit of MPs' expenses.

Conference believes that:

- a) All expenses must be justified on the basis of enabling MPs to do their job.
- b) Taxpayers have a right to know how their money is being spent and MPs, as public servants, should therefore behave in a transparent and fair manner.
- c) Since MPs should deliver the best value for money for the people they represent, any reform of expenses should not increase, and ideally should reduce, the total cost of politics to the taxpayer.
- d) No one should be above the law, and any MPs found guilty of criminal wrongdoing should face the full penalty of the law.

Conference therefore calls for:

1. Those MPs who have clearly and deliberately broken the rules with respect to expenses to be subject to appropriate investigation and, where justified, criminal prosecution.
2. All MPs, regardless of party allegiance, to commit to implementing the recommendations of Sir Christopher Kelly's independent inquiry.
3. MPs not to be permitted to make capital gains from the sale of second homes funded by the taxpayer - any such gains should go to back to the public purse.
4. Liberal Democrat internal procedures to be beyond reproach and to ensure that MPs stay within the spirit of any new rules, as well as the letter of them.

Applicability: Federal.

This motion creates new policy on MPs' expenses in response to the recent Parliamentary expenses scandal, building on the policies for constitutional reform set out in policy paper 83, For the People, By the People (2007).

Conference voted to accept amendments to insert C and 3.

Rail Franchises

Conference notes:

- i) The growing number of passenger rail franchises now being agreed with substantial and increasing amounts of premium to be paid to the Treasury.
- ii) That rail franchisees also have to pay their share of the costs of Rolling Stock Operating Companies' and Network Rail's charges.
- iii) That Britain's rail fares are already among the highest in Europe.
- iv) That in most cases franchisees are awarded a private monopoly with no choice of provider being offered to the rail traveller.

Conference condemns recent increases in both regulated and unregulated rail fares, which are higher than the then rate of inflation and bore particularly hard on those who depend on the railway to commute to work.

Conference deplores:

- a) The fact that the Labour Government has continued to pursue a highest premium model of awarding monopoly franchises, with clear problems and stresses now becoming evident across the rail industry and consequent large fare increases which are little more than a stealth tax on one of the greenest modes of transport.
- b) The way this franchise model has led to companies overbidding for franchises, creating the situation where both GNER and now National Express have handed back the East Coast franchise to the Government, leaving the taxpayer with a greater cost to bear.
- c) The apparent inability of the Office of Rail Regulation to force transparency in how individual fares from individual stations are set even for regulated fares, and its past acquiescence in disproportionate increases imposed on particular classes of passenger who use off-peak services and in differing fares being applied arbitrarily to apparently similar journeys from similar stations.

Conference further notes belated moves by the Government to end the situation where individual regulated fares are allowed to increase by more than the RPI+1% cap in ways that further increased fare inequalities as long as the overall 'basket' of regulated fares increased by no more than the cap.

Conference demands that:

1. The Government retain the East Coast franchise until the end of the current franchise term as a public interest franchise, to act as a public sector comparator to drive up standards and drive down costs across the rest of the rail network.
2. The Government scrap the failing franchise system and replace it with one that prioritises the passenger over higher premium payments; new franchise conditions must lead on quality of service and of passenger experience, including, where possible, fare reductions, with rolling reviews to ensure standards are being met.
3. The government guarantee that any surplus from franchise premiums should continue to be invested in rail improvements, to include improved services, more rolling stock, and, where economically viable, the reopening of stations and lines.
4. As soon as possible overall annual increases in rail fares should be at no more than inflation, as part of the wider agenda of promoting green forms of travel.

Applicability: England and Wales.

Policy Motions passed at conference continued

This motion develops previous policy on the system of rail franchises set out in policy paper 85, Fast Track Britain: Building a Transport System for the 21st Century (2008).

Conference rejected an amendment that sought to add in 1, after 'network', the words: 'with a view, based on its success, to considering bringing back of rail services into public ownership'.

Reaffirming the Military Covenant

Conference notes:

- i) The bravery, commitment and professionalism of Britain's Armed Forces, as demonstrated in deployments around the world, particularly Afghanistan and Iraq.
- ii) The party's ongoing commitment to Armed Forces' welfare and wider defence policy, through Nick Harvey's paper Our Nation's Duty in 2007 and No Choice but Change by Sir Menzies Campbell QC MP, in 2008.
- iii) That the mismatch between resources and expectations, coupled with high levels of overstretch, undermines the work of the armed forces and the success of operations.
- iv) That over 60,000 serving personnel, including soldiers on the front line in Afghanistan, are paid less than the starting salary of a police officer or firefighter.
- v) That years of neglect by successive Labour and Conservative Governments have left three-quarters of service family accommodation in England alone below the highest standard, with much of it in an unacceptable condition.
- vi) That the psychological toll from service in Iraq and Afghanistan remains unquantifiable but will become increasingly apparent over the next decade.

Conference believes that:

- a) Service personnel are the lifeblood of the Armed Forces and the country's most valuable military asset.
- b) If the armed forces continue to be submitted to overstretch without proper resources, the country fails to honour the military covenant and endangers their effectiveness.
- c) Military effectiveness depends upon the recognition and fulfilment of the obligations of the military covenant.
- d) The 'duty of care' to service personnel and their families should be honoured, and the military covenant reaffirmed and restored.

Conference therefore calls for:

1. The basic pay of lower ranks and NCOs to be brought in line with equivalent police ranks, so that a private in Afghanistan is paid no less than a newly qualified police constable, funded through MOD staff restructuring.
2. A doubling in the number of forces' family homes refurbished from around 800 to around 1600 per year, halving the length of time it will take to achieve the highest grade, funded through reasonable reductions in senior armed forces officers in the MOD.
3. A review of the current arrangements for repair and maintenance of forces' accommodation with a feasibility study on returning to a warden system for military housing estates.
4. Members of the armed forces and their immediate family to be entitled to housing, within three months of their last date of paid service, in

the local authority area where they last lived before signing up, and to be offered apprenticeships, other training or employment; and a review by the Ministry of Defence of the social outcomes for personnel leaving the forces.

5. The families of deceased service personnel whose death is attributable to their military service to be entitled to the burial or cremation of their family member without cost in the place of family choice within the UK.
6. The military covenant between the state, society and the army to be codified to guarantee real entitlements for service personnel of all three services and their families.
7. Proper medical provision for all current and former service personnel including:
 - a) Post conflict debriefings.
 - b) The availability of counselling by specialist trained counsellors at any time in life, with particular emphasis on post-traumatic stress disorder.
 - c) Adequate facilities and funding for relatives to visit during hospital treatment and recuperation.
8. Reform to voting arrangements for service personnel so that they and their families can exercise their democratic rights.
9. Savings to be sought from fighter jet procurement and operational costs and invested in helicopters for Afghanistan to provide vital additional capabilities.
10. A full-scale Strategic Security and Defence Review.

Applicability: Federal.

This motion develops policies on the welfare of the armed forces, in particular it calls for the basic pay of the lower ranks to be raised to the level of police officers and for a full-scale Strategic Security and Defence Review. Previous policy is set out in policy paper 86, Security and Liberty in a Globalised World (2008), and policy paper 48, Defending Democracy (2002).

Conference voted to accept an amendment to insert 4 and 5.

Conference voted to accept an amendment to replace the previous wording 'Proper medical provision for all service personnel including post-conflict debriefings and counselling, with particular emphasis on post-traumatic stress disorder' with 7 as in the final motion.

Real Women (Women Policy Paper)

Conference welcomes the equality gains women have made over the last few decades but regrets that the rate of change is slowing and actually going into reverse in some areas; for example, the gender pay gap widened last year.

Conference regrets that women still do a disproportionate amount of the care-giving and unpaid work in society and that they are increasingly encouraged to 'live up to' unrealistic ideals of beauty and imagery, which often trivialises their position within society.

Conference believes that all people should have equal opportunities in life and not be held back because of the circumstances of their birth, including their gender. Conference is committed to addressing the particular needs of women through national policy and believes that this policy should be guided by the following principles:

- A. Expanding opportunities so that:
 - i) Women have a real choice about how to balance caring responsibilities and work.

Policy Motions passed at conference continued

- ii) Men can play a fuller role in the lives of their children.
- iii) Women (and men) can achieve a better work-life balance.

B. Empowering women to:

- i) Improve their financial situation.
- ii) Make them feel safer.
- iii) Increase their access to information.
- iv) Challenge trends which overly sexualise and trivialise the position of women.
- v) Play a full part in politics as voters and elected representatives.

C. Challenging conformity by:

- i) Encouraging diversity in the media and popular culture.
- ii) Allowing young girls the space to develop their own ideals.

Conference therefore endorses policy paper 91, *Real Women*, as a statement of the party's key policies for eradicating gender inequalities and creating a better society. Conference particularly welcomes:

1. Plans to create a safer society and help the victims of crime by:

- a) Providing up to 10 new Sexual Assault Referral Centres and 15 new Rape Crisis Centres.
- b) Ending the 'no recourse to public funds' requirement which currently applies to those with uncertain immigration status.
- c) Introducing a well-publicised guard's carriage on late-night trains.
- d) Developing a stopping-on-request service for buses late at night.
- e) Providing a freephone helpline for use by victims of trafficking and for clients who suspect that women have been trafficked.

2. Proposals to create a better work-life balance and improve childcare by:

- a) Extending the right to request flexible working to all employees.
- b) Reaffirming the proposals for universal childcare and enhanced parental leave in policy paper 88, *The Best Start for Children*, *The Best Deal for Families*.

3. Proposals to challenge the narrow and overly sexualised aesthetic presented in the media and popular culture by:

- a) Requiring OFCOM and the ASA to mainstream gender equality into their regulation of the media.
- b) Requiring all advertisements to declare the extent to which digital retouching technology has been used to create overly perfected and unrealistic images of women (and men).

4. Proposals to allow young girls (and boys) the space to challenge conformity and to decrease their chances of developing eating disorders by:

- a) Banning the use of digital retouching technology in advertisements aimed at under 16s, which creates overly perfected and unrealistic images of women (and men); we would work with industry professionals to ensure that legislation was appropriately worded to reflect these aims.
- b) Providing age-appropriate lessons on body-image and media literacy as part of Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) in schools.

5. Proposals to improve the physical and mental health of women by:

- a) Producing patient-recorded outcome measures for the cosmetic surgery industry.
- b) Improving school and community sports facilities to make them cleaner, safer and more female-friendly.
- c) Requiring public service television to provide coverage of the most important women's sports events and to support the movement to have netball included in the 2012 London Olympics.

- d) Recruiting and training more health visitors and midwives.

6. Plans to tackle discrimination at work and in pay by:

- a) Requiring companies to publish data on the pay scales within their organisations and to conduct pay audits.
- b) Allowing women (and men) to bring representative actions and allowing women from ethnic minorities who have faced 'double discrimination' to bring a case on more than one ground.
- c) Allowing the use of hypothetical comparators.
- d) Introducing a 'name blanking' policy so that job applicants apply with National Insurance numbers.
- e) Scrapping mandatory retirement ages.

Applicability: Federal, except 1, 4 b) and 5 and childcare aspects of 2 which are England only.

This motion updates and develops policy on violence against women, work-life balance, body image and health, and pay discrimination. In particular it creates new policy on: representative actions in pay disputes, the use of hypothetical comparators, 'name blanking' in the recruitment process, tackling body image pressures and sexualisation.

*Previous policy can be found in policy paper 88, *The Best Start for Children*, the *Best Deal for Families* (March 2009), policy paper 90, *Investing in Talent, Building the Economy* (March 2009), policy paper 80, *Freedom from Poverty for All* (2007), and policy paper 72, *Stronger Families, Brighter Futures* (2006).*

Conference voted to accept amendments to insert v) and 5 c).

Conference voted to retain 6 d).

Conference rejected an amendment that sought to delete 3 and 4 and insert:

3. Proposals to challenge the often narrow portrayal of gender roles within the media, but recognising that this can best be done through a process of cultural change rather than by regulation by the state.

4. Proposals to empower young girls (and boys) to challenge conformity and to decrease their chances of developing eating disorders by encouraging schools and local authorities to develop age-appropriate lessons on body image and media literacy as part of Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) in schools.

Standing Up for Civil Liberties

Conference notes that:

- A. The last twenty years has seen the steady erosion of civil liberties in Britain.
- B. A generation of children are growing up as strangers to the treasured freedoms on which Britain once prided itself.
- C. The Government is spending billions of pounds collecting more and more of people's personal data.

Conference notes with concern that:

- i) Britain has the largest DNA database in the world, including data on a million innocent people.
- ii) There is one CCTV camera for every fourteen people in Britain.
- iii) Surveillance powers designed to fight serious crime and terrorism have been used over 10,000 times by councils in the last five years.
- iv) The Labour Government has created over 3,600 new criminal offences.
- v) Privacy International ranks Britain alongside Russia, China, Malaysia and Singapore as the only countries in the world which are 'endemic surveillance societies'.
- vi) Britain has the longest period of detention without charge of all comparable common law countries.

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- vii) Recent events, including the G20 protests and the pre-emptive arrest of 114 environmental activists in Nottingham, have indicated an increasingly repressive approach to policing protest.
- viii) Asylum seekers, gypsies, prisoners, terror suspects and other groups have suffered a sustained attack on their human rights.
- ix) Defendants aged under 18 are currently denied the right to choose jury trial.
- x) That there are now an estimated 3500 'Mosquito Devices' in the UK, which are designed to emit a high pitched noise to deter young people from gathering in certain areas.

Conference believes that:

- a) Successive authoritarian Labour and Conservative Governments have passed laws which have turned the UK into a surveillance state.
- b) Liberty should not be sacrificed in the name of security.
- c) The state must not be allowed to trample over an individual's right to privacy, liberty, free expression and association.
- d) The commitment of political parties to civil liberties and human rights is measured by whether they are prepared to protect them in the case of unpopular and marginalised groups and not just for 'free-born Englishmen'.
- e) A Freedom Bill should be created to restore and protect fundamental liberties.
- f) Human rights including the right to jury trial should be available to all regardless of age.

Conference therefore calls for:

1. The maximum period of pre-charge detention to be reduced back to 14 days.
2. The flawed control orders regime to be abolished.
3. The unfair extradition treaty with the United States to be renegotiated.
4. ID cards to be scrapped, including for foreign nationals.
5. Surveillance powers to be restricted for use only for the investigation of serious crimes and to require a warrant from a magistrate.
6. All innocent people to be removed from the DNA database immediately.
7. The regulation of CCTV, following a Royal Commission.
8. The immediate restoration of the right to protest in Parliament Square.
9. The restoration of the right to a public assembly of more than two people.
10. No restrictions in the right to trial by jury for serious offences.
11. The strengthening of freedom of information, with fewer exemptions and more power for the Information Commissioner.
12. The ContactPoint database of all children to be scrapped.
13. The repeal of the offences of aggravated trespass and trespass on designated sites.
14. The Repeal of Section 76 of the Terrorism Act, under which it may be an offence to photograph a police officer.
15. The repeal of pre-charge bail conditions, which allow the police to impose draconian restrictions on people that have not been charged with any crime.
16. The removal of 'offensive' as an ingredient of a crime under Section 5 of the Public Order Act.
17. Defendants aged under 18 to be able to choose jury trial if charged with any offence that can lead to a custodial sentence.
18. The banning of all 'Mosquito Devices' following the advice of the Children's Commissioner for England.
19. The protection of freedom of expression, by reforming the libel laws in England and Wales to ensure that a better balance is provided between free speech, responsible journalism, scientific discourse and the public interest on the one hand and powerful corporations, wealthy individuals and vested interests on the other.

Applicability: Federal, except 6, 11, 17 and 19 which are England and Wales, and ix), x), 12, and 18 which are England only.

This motion updates and develops policy on civil liberties.

Previous policy is set out in, conference motion Surveillance Society (2007), conference motion Preventing Terrorism, Defending Civil Liberties and Protecting Minorities (2005), and conference motion Civil Liberties (2005).

Conference voted to accept amendments to insert ix), x), 17, 18 and 19.

Conference voted to delete the words 'except those acquitted of a serious violent or sexual offence' which originally appeared in 6, between the words 'people' and 'to be'.

Conference rejected an amendment that sought to replace 6 with:

6. No record to be retained on the DNA database for any person arrested but not subsequently charged with any offence.

Tackling Youth Unemployment

Conference notes:

- i) The number of qualified school leavers and adults looking to retrain who have been unable to attend university this year, currently estimated as in excess of 50,000, due to a shortage of places.
- ii) That the number of young people not in education, employment or training rose to nearly one million by the end of August.
- iii) That unemployment across the country currently stands at around 2.5 million.
- iv) That funding additional student places would enable universities to avoid redundancies, and may lead to additional recruitment.

Conference reaffirms its belief that all young people should have the best possible opportunities in education and training, regardless of their socio-economic background and local environment.

Conference further believes that:

- a) The disappointed students this year are most likely to be from less privileged backgrounds, where access to and use of information is more limited, help is less available and applications are likely to have been made later.
- b) Even in the event of a sustained turnaround, the condition of the job market for school leavers is likely to remain poor for at least another year. This, combined with a large output from schools, and any disappointed candidates from this year who reapply, will lead to an even greater problem next year.
- c) An economic downturn provides an opportunity to train and equip the workforce with the skills the country needs upon entering recovery, and such an opportunity is currently being missed.
- d) The response of the Government to this crisis has been insufficient and poorly planned.
- e) Some universities, particularly in the post-92 category, are prepared to accept students up to the start of term in October, should conditions change.
- f) Alternatives to higher education should also be encouraged and supported, such as apprenticeships and vocational training.
- g) Youth unemployment represents under-utilisation of talent and means that government money is being spent for negligible economic benefit.
- h) The Government's VAT cut has produced little or no benefit for the estimated £1 billion per month which it is costing.

Conference therefore calls on the government to:

1. Fund 10,000 extra university places and invest additional resources into Foundation Degrees, to be paid for by scrapping the wasteful VAT cut.
2. Fully fund the off-the-job costs of apprenticeships for over-18s, diverting the necessary funding from the 'Train to Gain' programme.

Applicability: England and Wales.

Policy Motions passed at conference continue

This motion creates new policy on the creation of 10,000 extra university places and restates previous policy on the funding of adult apprenticeships, as outlined in policy paper 90, Investing in Talent, Building the Economy (March 2009).

The Future of Devolution

Conference believes that Scotland and Wales are distinct nations with distinct identities and long-standing political, cultural and social identities.

Conference celebrates ten years of devolution in Scotland and Wales and congratulates those, not least in the Liberal Democrats, who worked for generations to bring about change through the Scotland Act and the Government of Wales Act.

Conference recognises that opposition to devolution is declining and smaller and smaller percentages of people now wish to recentralise power within the UK, and that there now exists an appetite for the devolution of further powers and responsibilities to Scotland and Wales.

Conference notes:

- i) The report of the Calman Commission on Scottish Devolution which recommends significant new powers and responsibilities for the Scottish Parliament and more formal, strengthened links between the governments and parliaments at Holyrood and Westminster.
- ii) That the debates started by the All-Wales Convention and the Independent Commission of Funding and Finance for Wales are leaning towards the acquisition of a greater range of powers for the National Assembly for Wales in order to serve better the people of Wales.

Conference believes that:

- A. Devolution is about using powers for a purpose to build a more liberal society, where local communities and individual citizens are empowered and where government is equipped to act to widen the opportunities and life chances available to every individual.
- B. The experience of the last ten years has shown that Whitehall does not always know best and that people are better served by different governments working closer to them.
- C. The devolution of powers to Scotland and Wales has brought benefits to public services and politics across the whole of the UK, including:
 - i) The campaign to retain the principle of free higher education having been strengthened as the result of changes supported by the Liberal Democrats in Scotland and Wales.
 - ii) The demand for decent, affordable personal care for the elderly having found a new voice because of the work of the Scottish Parliament.
 - iii) The legal restriction on smoking in public places in England having been made more comprehensive because of the lead set by the legislation passed by the Scottish Parliament.
 - iv) The implementation of the Foundation Phase in primary education in Wales having led the debate on how education for younger children should be delivered.
- D. On matters such as green energy targets, improvements to public transport, community regeneration and policies to protect families from home repossession, the people of every part of the United Kingdom have benefited from stronger debate about the policy choices available to their governments.

Conference calls for:

1. All parties in the UK Parliament, the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales to endorse the work and recommendations of the Calman Commission on Scottish Devolution.

2. All parties to commit to campaigning for the devolution of greater legislative powers to the National Assembly for Wales and for powers over other areas, such as justice, prisons and policing and broadcasting, to be devolved to the Assembly.
3. Urgent initiatives to address the democratic deficit for England, and the replacement of the Barnett Formula for allocating funding to the countries of the UK with a needs-based formula.
4. The UK Parliament, the Scottish Parliament and the National Assembly for Wales to embrace a new constitutional arrangement which is flexible and adaptable enough to meet the changing needs of the United Kingdom but which will stand the test of time in the twenty-first century, including:
 - a) Immediate reform to parliamentary procedures to reflect the need for closer working and greater collaboration between parliaments.
 - b) The introduction of a shared system of responsibility and control with clear rules to reflect a new relationship between the UK and devolved governments based on mutual respect and co-operation.
 - c) The UK Parliament to use the Queen's Speech to guarantee parliamentary time for legislation to enact the necessary changes to the Scotland Act and Government of Wales Act to widen the economic, environmental and social choices available to the people of Scotland and Wales while adding to the effective governance of the whole of the United Kingdom.

Applicability: Federal.

This motion updates policy on Scottish and Welsh devolution. Previous policy is set out in policy paper 83, For the People, By the People (2007), and policy paper 40, Reforming Governance in the UK (2000).

Conference voted to accept an amendment to insert 3.

The Policing of Protest

Conference notes with concern the more aggressive approach to protest recently adopted by the police, notably the treatment of demonstrators at Kingsnorth power station in Kent in August 2008 and at the G20 demonstrations in the City of London on 1st and 2nd April 2009; and the pre-emptive arrest of 114 environmental protestors in Nottinghamshire on 13th April 2009.

Conference recognises that the policing of demonstrations is a necessary and sometimes difficult task but believes that the strategy and tactics currently being adopted are fundamentally wrong, because of the threat to democratic rights, the distress and physical injuries caused, and the damage to the reputation of the police.

Conference welcomes the interim report of the HMIC review of public order policing, and believes that the publication of the final report due later this autumn should be an opportunity for a thorough reassessment and reform.

Conference believes that British policing is at its best when it adheres to the historic Peelian principle, 'that the police are the public and the public are the police'.

Accordingly, Conference believes that the policing of protest should be based firmly on the following principles:

1. Demonstrations and other peaceful forms of protest are a fundamental democratic right, which all public bodies are under a duty to facilitate and protect.
2. It is not the business of the police to set the boundaries of democratic expression; in particular, it is unacceptable for the police to prevent or disrupt legitimate protest through such tactics as pre-emptive arrest and draconian bail conditions.

Policy Motions passed at conference continued

3. Policing of demonstrations must always be proportionate; the police must recognise the fundamental need to facilitate peaceful protest while dealing with the specific problem of preventing criminal acts committed by a minority.
 4. The use of aggressive or intimidatory tactics against peaceful protesters is provocative, inappropriate, and counter-productive, since it increases the tension and likelihood of violence; the police must use aggressive tactics such as 'kettling', baton charges, and attacks with dogs only when they are absolutely necessary and proportionate; the seizure of personal property from demonstrators is not acceptable.
 5. Any officers not clearly identifying themselves by wearing an identification number are committing a disciplinary offence; this rule is unlikely to be respected unless transgressors are subject to disciplinary procedures.
 6. The police must exercise due care and attention when making statements to the media, since predictions of violence can be self-fulfilling; while acknowledging that the police are often under media pressure to comment on events, they should avoid offering definitive comment before the relevant facts are known.
 7. The police must consider Britain's reputation abroad and not commit acts that set a poor example and thus undermine the country's efforts to promote human rights.
- a) Devolving power to local authorities so that they can raise and spend taxes on local priorities.
 - b) Encouraging local authorities to work with the Debt Management Office to issue bonds and raise money for local investments.
 - c) Decentralising central government by moving departments out of London.
4. Rebuild a competitive, well-regulated financial services sector which supports the wider economy by:
 - a) Bringing about a restoration of a local banking infrastructure, with a clear separation between 'utility' style high-street banking and higher-risk investment banking.
 - b) Ensuring that hedge funds are run responsibly and if they cannot stick to the industry scheme of best practice then to introduce statutory regulation.
 - c) Exposing any potential high-risk activity by introducing a disclosure regime whereby all positions of economic interest above a specific threshold would be disclosed to the market.
 - d) Refining the bank licensing system within the stricter prudential regulatory regime, strengthening conflicts of interest rules, and bringing the banking sector within the purview of competition law in a way similar to that of other sector-specific regulators in the UK.
 - e) Committing the business tax regime to consistency rather than constant changes and identifying areas for greater international cooperation on tax policy, for example by treating accounting conventions consistently.

Applicability: England and Wales.

This motion creates new policy.

Thriving in a Globalised World – A Strategy for Britain (Domestic Responses to Globalisation Policy Paper)

Conference recognises that globalisation has brought enormous benefits to the UK, but also that it brings challenges. Conference, however, rejects any alleged solutions to the challenges of globalisation based on the UK simply turning inward upon itself.

Conference believes that the Liberal Democrat response to the impact of globalisation on the UK should focus on:

- i) The development of a competitive, flexible and decentralised economy.
- ii) Tackling the economic and social issues which may arise from international movements of labour.
- iii) Meeting these challenges in a way which promotes sustainable production and consumption.

Conference therefore endorses policy paper 92, *Thriving in a Globalised World – A Strategy for Britain*. In particular, conference welcomes its proposals to:

1. Create a better skilled and more flexible workforce by:
 - a) Fully funding the off-the-job training costs of apprenticeships.
 - b) Developing a national application system for apprenticeships, similar to UCAS.
 - c) Covering the full fee costs for first level 3 qualifications (e.g. A-levels, advanced apprenticeships and NVQ Level 3) for those over age 25.
 - d) Abolishing tuition fees for all part-time and full-time HE courses.
2. Promote research, development and innovation (RDI) by:
 - a) Working more closely with the private sector in prioritising and exploiting RDI.
 - b) Creating a strategic research capacity fund for university RDI.
3. Spread economic opportunities across the UK by:

5. Ensure that migration benefits all geographical areas and sections of the community by:
 - a) Introducing a regional points-based work permit system which awards more points to immigrants willing to move to areas where there are the will and the resources to welcome them, as well as for possessing skills which the UK economy as a whole needs.
 - b) Launching an urgent review into how population is measured at the local level so that sudden changes in local population can be more swiftly reflected in the allocation of central resources to local authorities.
 - c) Requiring government departments to collect data on the regional and sector-specific effects of migration on employment and wage levels.
 - d) Strengthening employment law in relation to agency and temporary workers.
6. Promote sustainable production, consumption and trade by:

- a) Replacing the concept of 'air miles' and 'food miles' with an agreed international labelling system which measures 'environmental impact' and covers key indicators such as energy efficiency and biodiversity.
- b) Introducing national carbon consumption targets and giving these the same level of prominence as carbon emissions targets.
- c) Analysing product supply chains in order to identify the opportunities for reducing resource use, and providing support for industry initiatives to reduce resource use and pollution.

Conference recognises that the UK's ability to respond effectively to the challenges of globalisation is strengthened by its membership of the European Union with its single internal market permitting free movement of people, goods, services and capital and its increasing capacity for coordinated international action; welcomes the EU's considerable success in resisting pressure for protectionism internally and externally in an economically difficult period and urges the continuation of an open European economy and society.

Applicability: Federal, except 1 a) – c) and local government aspects of 3 which are England only, and 1 d) which is England and Wales.

This motion and the accompanying policy paper update and develop

Policy Motions passed at conference continued

policy on the UK's response to globalisation, in terms of domestic policy. In particular, the motion calls for a regional points-based immigration system, introducing national carbon consumption targets, analysis of product supply chains and restoring local banking infrastructure.

Previous policy is set out in policy paper 90, Investing in Talent, Building the Economy (March 2009), conference motion Reforming the Finance Sector (March 2009), policy paper 82, Zero Carbon Britain – Taking a Global Lead (2007), and conference motion Immigration in the 21st Century (2007).

Conference voted to accept an amendment to add the last paragraph beginning: 'Conference recognises that the UK's ability to respond ...'.

Tidal Solution: The Way Forward

Conference accepts the urgent need to tackle climate change and regrets the government's lamentable progress towards the UK's modest target of 15% of energy consumption to come from renewable sources by 2020, which is well below the EU average of 20% by 2020.

Conference recognises the potential to generate power from the tidal range of the Severn Estuary. Conference notes that the debate about how best to harness the power of the Severn has been running for decades.

Conference reaffirms its commitment to 30% of the UK's electricity coming from clean, non-carbon-emitting sources by 2020, rising to 100% by 2050, and commits to generating a significant part of that from tidal energy.

Conference notes the report by the Liberal Democrat Severn Tidal Group A Tidal Solution – the Way Forward.

Conference calls upon the Government to provide significant enabling funds for emerging technologies.

Conference believes the only sustainable way forward for generating electricity in an environmentally friendly way is to put Wales and the South West of England to the very front of the world in tidal energy technology and provide skills and expertise that can be sold around the world.

Consequently, Conference endorses the following range of proposals to generate energy from the Severn Estuary:

1. Research into tidal range solutions should be properly funded, and treated with urgency, by providing significant enabling funds for emerging technologies through the Government's already established processes and by developing a range of innovative solutions such as fences, reefs, and tidal impounds or lagoons, always taking care to provide against harmful effects from upstream flooding.

2. In particular, conference notes the potential of the Tidal Reef solution proposed for Minehead to Aberthaw and believes that full-scale research and development of this scheme should see immediate progress.
3. A tidal impound should be built in the Bristol Channel/Severn Estuary as a pilot project which could provide electricity generation on demand.
4. A barrage may be part of the mix of tidal solutions available in the Bristol Channel and the Severn Estuary – while the proposal for a large barrage from Brean to Lavernock is not an appropriate solution given the huge environmental cost, the intermittency of its electricity production, and the expected completion date of around 2030, we believe that the 'Shoots' Barrage, following the line of the second Severn crossing, offers the best choice, balancing environmental, economic and speed of construction issues.

Conference notes that taken together, the Liberal Democrat proposals laid out in the report A Tidal Solution – the Way Forward will provide more electricity from renewable sources than a Brean to Lavernock Barrage.

Applicability: England and Wales.

This motion creates new policy on generation of energy from the Severn Estuary. Previous party policy on renewable energy is set out in policy paper 82, Zero Carbon Britain – Taking a Global Lead (2007).

The full text of the report of the Liberal Democrat Severn Tidal Group can be found on the Welsh Liberal Democrats website at: <http://welshlibdems.org.uk/documents/files/A%20Tidal%20Solution%20%20The%20Way%20Forward.pdf>

Conference voted to retain 4.

Conference voted to accept an amendment to insert the text of the first paragraph in place of original wording which read:

Conference accepts the urgent need to tackle climate change and regrets the government's lamentable progress towards its own modest target of 15% of energy consumption to come from renewable sources by 2020.

Conference also voted to accept an amendment to insert at the end of 1: 'always taking care to provide against harmful effects from upstream flooding.'

Business Motions passed at conference

Amendments to Election Regulations

Amendments to Committee Election Regulations

Insert new rule 4 (b) and renumber subsequent parts of rule 4 accordingly:

- (b) The Returning Officer may make provision for voters to view the candidates' election addresses electronically as well as, or instead of, through the postal mailing.

Insert new rule 5 and renumber subsequent rules accordingly:

5. The Returning Officer may make provision for voters who wish to do so to cast their ballots electronically.

Amendments to Leadership Election Regulations

Change rule 4 (a) to rule 4 and delete rule 4 (b).

Insert new rule 5 and renumber subsequent rules accordingly:

5. (a) The Acting Returning Officer shall co-ordinate arrangements for official party member hustings events via the states and regions with a view to balancing the competing demands for media coverage of the campaign, parliamentary and other duties. Other party bodies may only hold hustings-type events if they invite all candidates to attend, but they do not require the agreement of all candidates to attend or send a representative in order to proceed. Events designated as official hustings by the Acting Returning Officer shall take precedence over any other arrangements a candidate may have made.

Business Motions passed at conference continued

(b) Official party communications channels may only be used to promote hustings events approved by the Acting Returning Officer. Responsibility for organising and paying for any hustings event shall lie with the hosting organisation, but the Acting Returning Officer will assist in publicising official hustings events via the party's website, e-mail communications, Liberal Democrat News, etc.

Insert new rule 11 (d) and renumber subsequent parts of rule 11 accordingly:

(d) The Returning Officer may make provision for voters to view the candidates' election addresses electronically as well as, or instead of, through the postal mailing.'

Insert new rule 14 and renumber subsequent rules accordingly:

14. The Returning Officer may make provision for voters who wish to do so to cast their ballots electronically.

Amendments to Presidential Election Regulations

Insert new rule 5 and renumber subsequent rules accordingly:

5. (a) The Acting Returning Officer shall co-ordinate arrangements for official party member hustings events via the states and regions with a view to balancing the competing demands for media coverage of the campaign, parliamentary and other duties. Other party bodies may only hold hustings-type events if they invite all candidates to attend, but they do not require the agreement of all candidates to attend or send a representative in order to proceed. Events designated as official hustings by the Acting Returning Officer shall take precedence over any other arrangements a candidate may have made.

(b) Official party communications channels may only be used to promote hustings events approved by the Acting Returning Officer. Responsibility for organising and paying for any hustings event shall lie with the hosting organisation, but the Acting Returning Officer will assist in publicising official hustings events via the party's website, e-mail communications, Liberal Democrat News, etc.

In rule 9, after 'campaign.' insert:

This shall include any expenditure (or the relevant proportion of any expenditure) incurred before an individual becomes a candidate if the property, services or facilities are used for the purposes of the candidate's election.

Insert new rule 10 (d) and renumber subsequent parts of rule 10 accordingly:

(d) The Returning Officer may make provision for voters to view the candidates' election addresses electronically as well as, or instead of, through the postal mailing.

Insert new rule 14 and renumber subsequent rules accordingly:

14. The Returning Officer may make provision for voters who wish to do so to cast their ballots electronically.

The full text of the election regulations can be found with the party constitution on the party website, www.libdems.org.uk.

Applicability: Federal.

Membership Subscriptions and Federal Levy

Conference notes that:

- a) The Federal Executive is proposing that there be no change in minimum, concessionary or Youth and Student SAO and Freshers Fair subscription rates.
- b) The Federal Executive is proposing that the recommended rate should rise from £50 to £52 for 2010, which is expected to be general election year.
- c) Last year conference voted to raise the Federal Levy by 2% so that more of the increased income from subscriptions could be spent in the areas most in need of support in the local elections and that this had a beneficial effect on our local election campaign in June.
- d) In 2010, as well as the general election, there will be important local council elections, including the London Borough elections and the Metropolitan Councils, in which we are defending control of a significant number of councils and seeking to control more as well as defending nearly 1,000 council seats.
- e) During 2010, the party also needs to prepare for the very big round of local elections in 2011.
- f) The Federal Executive is therefore proposing that Federal Levy on membership renewal subscriptions for 2010 should remain at the 44% rate set by conference for 2009, so that additional funding can again be made available for the local elections where support is most needed.
- g) The English Party may consider alternative mechanisms of redistributing funds to areas of greatest need and that this might reduce the need for the higher rate of levy in the future.

Conference therefore resolves that for the year 2010:

1. The recommended subscription rate shall be £52.
2. The minimum subscription rate shall be £10.
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 the Youth and Student SAO shall pay a minimum of £6 or, where a new member joins at a Freshers Fair event, a special introductory rate of £1.
5. The Federal Levy on new members shall be 0% of the subscription paid and the Federal Levy on renewal subscriptions shall be 44% of the subscription paid.

Conference further resolves that 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.

Applicability: Federal.

Constitutional Amendments passed at conference

Amendments to Nomination of Presidential Candidates

In Article 12.1, after the words 'not less than', delete all and insert:

200 representatives entitled to attend the Federal Conference in not less than 20 Local Parties (including, for this purpose, the Specified Associated Organisations representing youth and students as provided by Article 13.8).

The relevant text of the existing constitution is as follows:

12.1A candidate for the office of President shall require the nomination of not less than 50 representatives entitled to attend the Federal Conference.

Applicability: Federal.

Questions on Reports to Conference

Report of the Federal Conference Committee (FCC)

Q1. Vera Head, Chiltern

How many motions were sent in for this autumn conference and who were they from? Please give the breakdown for Local Parties, SAOs and ten conference representatives.

Reply by Duncan Brack (Chair of FCC)

	10+ reps	Local parties	State parties	SAOs	FPC
Motions	24	23	1	8	5
Amendments	11	38	0	5	1
Emergency motions	1	14	0	3	0
Total (%)	36 (27%)	75 (56%)	1 (1%)	16 (12%)	6 (4%)

(Policy motions and amendments only)

Thanks very much for the question. The results are displayed in the table, with two additional categories – state parties and Federal Policy Committee (FPC) – and motions, amendments and emergency motions displayed separately.

Two points to note. The totals here are significantly higher than in recent years, particularly from local parties. One of our aims in changing the deadline structure was to make it easier for people to submit motions, and it looks like we've achieved this. Please keep them coming.

The second point is that the number of amendments in particular is very high. The reason for us keeping the final timings out of the printed agenda was to enable us to adjust the times for particular debates when we saw what the amendments were. Otherwise we'd have had to guess how long to give to debates, and we don't always get this right. In the end we made quite a lot of adjustments, which meant that we could take more amendments for some motions than we would previously been able to do – for example, four amendments on the civil liberties motion. I know that not including the final timings in the Agenda is a bit of pain, but I hope you can see why we're doing it – and we think it'll make for a better conference.

Supplementary question

I was prompted to ask this question from looking through the agenda and noticing that there were no motions from local parties selected. Is it time for FCC to introduce a quota system to allow local parties a fair share of the motions?

Reply by Duncan Brack (Chair of FCC)

This year far more of the amendments have been submitted by local parties than before, and almost all the emergency motions have been submitted by local parties. Many years ago there used to be a quota, but we found that this was restrictive and reduced the quality of the motions. It would appear that local parties are far more in the mode of discussing the agenda and submitting amendments where they feel the policy falls short, rather than submitting motions in the first place.

Q2. Ronald Heinrich, Cambridge

Holding conferences in major cities and towns with high accommodation costs, geared to business conferences, will discourage members facing redundancy, pay cuts, part-time employment and pension losses, from attending. Financial disenfranchisement is undemocratic. Surely we need venues with a wide range of types of accommodation, and good public transport to the conference centres?

Reply by Duncan Brack (Chair of FCC)

Thanks for the question. We do indeed need venues with a wide range of types of accommodation, and cheap accommodation, good public

transport, all the facilities we need, and so on. Sadly there aren't many of them around. You can see that we're going to two cities next year – Birmingham and Liverpool. The average cost of accommodation does tend to be a bit higher, though I know that very low-cost accommodation was easier to find in Liverpool than in Harrogate, for example.

But our basic problem is that there simply aren't many options. If we stay away from cities, that means for the autumn conference we stay permanently in Brighton, Bournemouth or Blackpool – which means we stay in Brighton or Bournemouth – forever. We believe that's not fair to party members from northern England or Scotland. Also bear in mind that both next year's venues, for instance, are very keen to have us, which means that we have negotiated good deals with them, which means in turn that we're generating enough income both to subsidise registration fees – which we do very heavily – and to contribute to the party's campaigning activities. We do recognise the need for a good range of accommodation types and prices, though, and we are already talking to next year's venues about how to make sure that happens.

Campaign for Gender Balance (CGB)

Q1. Jo Christie-Smith, Lewisham & Beckenham North

So far, in getting an extra 83 women on the approved candidate list we have only achieved just over half our target before the next general election. This is a significant failure to achieve the target. I note the continuing work to encourage new people to come forward but what work is being done within the party to ensure retention and continuing interest of female candidates already approved?

Reply by Ros Gordon (Chair of CGB)

Thanks for your kind words. We haven't reached the general election yet so we still have time to improve, but I am not 100% sure we'll reach the target of an additional 150 women on the approval list; however, we will try. The new approval process has taken time to become fully up and running, which did slow down the numbers being assessed, but that has improved recently. We support the new process as it allows a wider range of people with different skill sets to become candidates, but it has slowed things down in respect of the targets. I have become an assessor to help, and would encourage others to do so. The more assessors we have the more assessment days we can run. This is really important to speed up the process of getting candidates approved and the training is open to anyone. Currently we have 20 women waiting for approval days, over 200 women have asked for packs and 24 women who have not been members for long enough (you currently need to be a member a year).

Originally retention was not part of the remit for the Campaign for Gender Balance, but as our other target is in relation to the number of PPCs in winnable seats, lack of retention is a concern for us. We instigated a resignation report which has come up with great recommendations to encourage women to continue being PPCs. We have been working with Tim Farron, Candidates Champion, and Margaret Joachim on this, they were appointed in response to the report. We have also been holding sessions at conference to enable people to vent their feelings, along with training and newsletters. This is not just an issue for CGB but an issue for the whole party. We need to work together to retain good candidates.

Supplementary question

Thank you for a good answer. We need to start measuring retention as we do approval and selection – your techniques have been so successful, can you broaden your scope to cover it?

Reply by Ros Gordon (Chair of CGB)

It is easy to spot the candidates who resign. It is much harder to identify those who just don't stand again. We have flagged this up as an issue to look at when going forward. We want to spread our good practices throughout the party, but unfortunately we only have so many resources.

Questions on Reports to Conference continued

Report of the Diversity Engagement Group (DEG)

Q1. Andrew Hudson

Evidence is increasingly growing that the most divisive issue now in Britain is economic inequalities and class. Will the Diversity Group also address this issue?

Reply by Dr Vince Cable MP (Chair of DEG)

From the view of the group there are many aspects where gender, ethnic background have disadvantages, but all is trumped by social class. People who are able but less well-off are overtaken, in the education system, by their better-off peers by the time they are six years old. This is a key factor in job opportunities. Education and class are the big determinants of life opportunities. Class has to be addressed through wider policy like the pupil premium.

Reply by Issan Ghazni (Diversity Advisor)

The single equality bill was supported by the party and was in the 2005 manifesto. A key aspect to this is that there is now a public duty to take into account socio-economic factors when determining policy and for this to be mainstreamed and made an additional strand of diversity. We in the Diversity Engagement Group will support this aspect.

Supplementary question

Are you aware that had the Liberal Democrats addressed this over 100 years ago there may have been no Labour Party?

Reply by Dr Vince Cable MP (Chair of DEG)

I can't dispute that.

Report of the Federal Finance & Administration Committee (FFAC)

Q1. Peter Hirst, Congleton

On page 13 of Reports to Conference, under Environmental Activity, you mention recycling and waste management. The most cost-effective method of cutting carbon emissions is energy efficiency. What further action has been taken since the last report to increase the energy efficiency of our headquarters, what evidence is there that this has been effective and what funding is ring-fenced for these environmental activities?

Reply by Cllr Duncan Greenland (Chair of FFAC)

The work to improve our energy efficiency is led by the Staff Safety, Health & Environmental Committee at Cowley St. We are implementing the recommendations from the Environmental Audit, which rated the environmental impact of the headquarters as best practice in most areas. Given the planning constraints as a listed building, this is no mean feat – but we are keen to improve!

We have recently purchased a smart meter to monitor our energy consumption and are planning to investigate additional measures to reduce the loss of energy from the building (thereby cutting our consumption). We also have plans to embark on a staff education initiative and are committed to sharing the best practice with other parts of the party. We also encourage staff to cycle to work by participating in and promoting the 'cycle to work' scheme.

As we use best practice wherever possible we have seen a reduction in our carbon emissions. The emissions were small to start with, so the decrease is also small. The evidence of our effectiveness is that our carbon emissions are reduced and the budget for this is mainstreamed in the general HQ budget.

Supplementary question

When is FFAC going to publish the levels of power consumption per annum? So conference can decide for itself if there has been a reduction in energy

consumption.

Reply by Cllr Duncan Greenland (Chair of FFAC)

I regret the implication that there has been no reduction in energy consumption. I will look into providing this within the report to next year's conference if this is feasible.

Q2. Jennie Rigg, Calderdale

What procedures does the party possess to establish whether or not donations should be accepted? What happens if donations are subsequently found to be fraudulently obtained?

Reply by Cllr Duncan Greenland (Chair of the FFAC)

All donations have to comply with the PPERA legislation, and we have always had formal procedures to ensure that compliance is met. Since the last general election we have reviewed and introduced a new formal procedure, endorsed by the Federal Executive and the Party Trustees, who now form the Audit & Compliance Board of the party to ensure that all donations are also politically acceptable.

Any donation over £5,000 has to be recorded by the Compliance Officer and approved by the Chief Executive, the Party Treasurer and the Chair of FFAC. Any donation over £25,000 has to be additionally approved also by the Chair of the Party Trustees / Audit and Compliance Board.

To ensure donations are politically acceptable, criteria have been drawn up to ensure that no donation is accepted if it has any conditions attached to it or if it risks embarrassing the party by the donor acting contrary to the policies of the party, or having inappropriate associations. If the donor is not active in the party, written references are required. The registered accounts of any company giving a donation have to be made available before corporate donations are accepted.

If we received a donation in good faith, had completed appropriate due diligence and had already spent money, which was then subsequently found to have been fraudulently obtained by the donor, UK law would not expect us to repay the money.

Q3. Gary Glover, Bermondsey and Old Southwark

Why is the membership form on www.libdems.org.uk unable to accept payment by Switch/Maestro and when will this be resolved?

Reply by Cllr Duncan Greenland (Chair of the FFAC)

We are unable to take Maestro card payments via the web at the moment because of a technical problem with the current website. The problem is intermittent, but rather than have a situation where users were unclear as to whether their cards had been debited or not, we decided to remove this particular card option.

The party is currently replacing its website and the problem will be fixed on the new site, due to go live at the end of October. In the meantime, all other card types are still functioning on the existing site.

Report of the Federal Executive (FE)

Q1. Jennie Rigg, Calderdale and Jo Christie-Smith

Please could you detail the steps that the Federal Executive is carrying out to ensure that the Party Reform Commission leads to specific action and doesn't end up just another report on a shelf?

Reply by Baroness Scott of Needham Market (President of the Liberal Democrats)

The Chief Officers Group (COG) has produced an action plan following the Party Reform Commission recommendations and both the COG and FE

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have reviewed this document. A second progress review of the outstanding recommendations will take place at the December Federal Executive. The Party Reform Commission recommendations for before the next general election were all included in the action plan. Those recommended for after the next general election were excluded.

Progress is being made in all areas covered by the Party Reform Commission, including developing the Lib Dem brand, governance, fundraising, membership and supporter engagement, volunteers, staffing, technology and databases, candidates, seat development and integrating teams and communications.

Supplementary question

It's unclear why this is not in the original report. Is the Chief Officers Group responsible for overall preparations for the general election? Who is in charge of the manifesto – the COG or FPC?

Reply by Baroness Scott of Needham Market (President of the Liberal Democrats)

There is a very complicated picture of governance and decision-making. The manifesto group has been established and is headed by Danny Alexander MP and they work closely with the FPC. The FE should not review the work of other teams, but trust in the system that has been established.

Q2. Jennie Rigg, Calderdale, Jo Christie-Smith, Lewisham & Beckenham North and Gareth Epps, Reading East

What is the remit and composition of the Chief Officers Group and how often has it met? What percentage of the COG's full members are women? What percentage of the COG's full members are BME? Please summarise the work of the COG during the 2008/9 period and explain why this information is not contained within the FE Report.

Response from the Federal Executive:

The Chief Officers Group (COG) consists of:

- Federal Leader (Chair)
- Federal President
- Chair of the English Party
- One representative from each of the Scottish and Welsh Parties (2)
- Chair of the Parliamentary Office of the Liberal Democrats (POLD)
- Party Treasurer
- Chair of FCC
- Chair of FFAC
- Chair of Campaigns & Communications Committee (CCC)
- The Federal Chief Executive

Purpose:

The COG is charged with the management of the party, which means, among other things, that it is responsible for determining the party's overall objectives and strategy, as well as ensuring delivery of results. The COG is accountable for this to the FE and the Federal Conference.

Key accountabilities:

- Setting the overall strategy and priorities (strategic objectives) for the party and working with State and Regional Parties to ensure effective execution at all levels of the party.
- Overall preparations for elections.
- Overall presentation, image and media relations of the party.
- Planning and monitoring the budget and finances of the party.
- Directing the administration of the party including its Chief Executive, headquarters, POLD and other staff.
- Empowering the Chief Executive to deliver the strategic objectives, subject to being accountable to the COG for his performance.
- The COG will seek advice from the FE and the party Chief Executive in setting the strategic objectives of the party.

Nine per cent of the membership is female and none are from ethnic minorities.

Q3. Jennie Rigg, Calderdale

The Federal Party has a remarkable number of bodies and offices with a responsibility for election strategy. In addition to the Federal Executive, Chief Officers Group and Campaigns and Communications Committee, there is a Chair of the General Election Campaign. On top of that, there is a staff structure, including the Chief Executive, Campaigns and Elections Director and, as of this Autumn, a Director of General Election Communications. How precisely do all these work together?

Reply by Baroness Scott of Needham Market (President of the Liberal Democrats)

I agree! There are a large number of party bodies with responsibility for elections.

As a political party we have the democratic structures, which operate with support from the professional staff. Both the COG and the CCC report to the FE and are part of the democratic structure of the party.

The Director of Campaigns & Elections and the Director of GE Communications report to the Chief Executive and are part of the professional staff structure. The role of the Chair of the General Election Campaign (appointed by the Leader) is to bring together both the democratic structures and professional staff to focus on our key priority over the next year – the general election.

Q4. Jennie Rigg, Calderdale

What were the main conclusions of the FE's scrutiny work on:

- the European and local election campaigns; and,
- membership?

Reply by Baroness Scott of Needham Market (President of the Liberal Democrats)

The European and local election campaign scrutiny was held at the last FE meeting and the report on this session will be discussed at the next FE meeting. I will report on the main conclusions in the next FE Report to Conference.

The membership scrutiny session took place electronically, following a scrutiny session last year. The main finding from these sessions is that we need to develop our support beyond the traditional membership relationship. There are thousands of people who want to support us, who want to keep in touch with us, but who don't want formal membership. We need both members and supporters and are working on this at the moment.

As part of this process the party's web presence will soon include a social action network for supporters to engage with the party and participate in campaigns. One of the aims will be to bring people through into membership. As part of this a members' only website is also being developed to empower our party members.

Q5. Jo Christie-Smith, Lewisham & Beckenham North

How does the Federal Executive plan to implement the proposal of a 'Leadership Academy' as proposed by the Party Reform Commission? When is it planned to begin training?

Reply by Baroness Scott of Needham Market (President of the Liberal Democrats)

A pilot high-quality leadership training two-day event with selected key seat PPCs using professional business-based trainers was held in July. This was a bespoke programme tailored to the needs of PPCs, with excellent feedback. A follow-up is planned for November. A review will be made of this training for the Capability Board to consider. The aim will be to develop a full programme of leadership training after the general election.

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Q6. Jennie Rigg, Calderdale and Gareth Epps, Reading East

- (a) What is the remit and composition of the Capability Board and how often has it met? Please summarise the work of the Capability Board during the 2008/9 period and explain why this information is not contained within the FE Report.
- (b) What is the remit and composition of the Technology Board and how often has it met? Please summarise the work of the Technology Board during the 2008/9 period and explain why this information is not contained within the FE Report.
- (c) What is the remit and composition of the Audit & Compliance Board and how often has it met? Please summarise the work of the Audit & Compliance Board during the 2008/9 period and explain why this information is not contained within the FE Report.
- d) What is the remit and composition of the Campaigns & Communications Committee and how often has it met? Please summarise the work of the Campaigns & Communications Committee during the 2008/9 period and explain why this information is not contained within the FE Report.

Response from the Federal Executive:

The Capability Board held its inaugural meeting in June and will be holding its next meeting in early October. Since it has only met once it has not reported to COG.

a) The Capability Board is chaired by Marcus Evans, who has a broad portfolio of training experience in the business world. Invitees to the inaugural meeting were professional trainers, known to the party as members, along with key party representatives from the English Party and the Training Task Group. A further request for expressions of interest will be issued after conference with the aim of increasing the team and ensuring input from all state parties.

The group identified as priorities:

- a) PPC pool development.
- b) Increasing the reach of training by:
1. Member development through engagement days and systematic follow-up;
 2. Development of online training and information systems;
 3. Proactive use of the regional network to promote training;
 4. Development of coaching and mentoring skills in trainers.

An action programme was discussed and a start has been made on implementation through the Training Task Group.

b) Technology Board membership:

Lynne Featherstone MP (Chair), Chris Fox (Chief Executive), Hilary Stephenson (Director of Campaigns & Elections), Matthew Hanney (Leader's Office), Rob Blackie (Hearts and Minds), Paul Thompson (Strategist, BBC IT & Deputy Chair), David Loxton (HQ IT), Richard Allan (technological side / Coders Army) and Mark Pack (Web Outreach) with Cat Turner and David Angell in attendance.

The full Board has met once and meets again after conference. Most of the work is done electronically. Since it has only met once it has not reported to COG.

The Technology Board will help to coordinate support to all level of the party on areas including but not limited to:

- The party's online presence.
- Developing the tools to empower volunteers online – our mybarackobama.com.
- Social media profile.
- E-mail and SMS campaigning etc.
- Database management issues.

c) The Audit & Compliance Board is a sub-group of the Trustees and its

membership is completely separate from the day-to-day running of the party. The members are Sir Ian Wrigglesworth (Chair), Eric Lowry, Lord Vallance, Baroness Northover and Mike Jeans.

Its remit is to fulfil the following functions:

- Oversee the audit function of the Federal Party accounts in consultation with the Joint FFAC/POLD Management Board for the Federal Party and POLD accounts.
- Ensure that the Federal Party and POLD comply in all respects with the PPERA legislation, the guidance of the Electoral Commission and the requirements of the Parliamentary authorities.
- Receive requests and reports from the party auditors to ensure that any recommended actions for their management reports are undertaken and completed.
- Ensure we have appropriate procedures in place to maintain compliance and that they are appropriately reviewed and monitored.
- Make recommendations and give advice on the appointment of the auditors to the FFAC and POLD Management Board.
- From time to time undertake reviews of practice in the party which involve our financial and compliance controls, ensuring that appropriate procedures and codes of practice are in place.
- Prepare codes of practice for party conduct in financial and compliance matters to recommend to COG and the FFAC/POLD Management Board.
- Make recommendations to COG and the FFAC/POLD Management Board on improvements and required improvements as financial and compliance procedures are reviewed.
- Through the Chair of the Trustees, assist with our procedures for reviewing the appropriateness and legality of all donations of more than £25,000 to the party/POLD, and participate in the agreed reviews, testing them against the agreed Donations Procedure.
- Undertake, review and prepare reports on appropriate financial and compliance matters requested by the COG, FE, the Leader and the Chief Executive.

It has met twice this year; once to establish itself and the second time to review the Audit Report and Recommendations before it proceeded to COG.

d) The Federal Executive has the power to establish the Campaigns and Communications Committee, which is responsible for:

- (i) Coordinating and planning the broadcasting and communications strategy for the Federal Party.
- (ii) Planning, supervising and coordinating the general election campaigns and preparations.
- (iii) Planning, coordinating and supervising other local, regional and European elections at Federal level.

The Campaigns and Communications Committee (CCC) shall consist of:

1. The party Leader.
2. The party President.
3. The Commons Chief Whip.
4. The Chairman (elected by the FE).
5. Two members elected by the FE.

Ed Davey MP has chaired the CCC ably over recent times. Going forward, Willie Rennie MP will be the new Chair. Over 2008/09 the CCC has met to review the campaign progress and the election results in the local and European elections.

Reports of the Parliamentary Parties of the Liberal Democrats

Q1. Peter Jones, Chiltern

What has the Parliamentary Party done to progress towards legislation party policy suggested by local parties and approved at the 2008 Bournemouth conference, specifically the motion *Safe Standing at Football Matches*?

Reply by Lorely Burt MP (Chair of the Parliamentary Party)

We have to be very sensitive with the issue of safe standing, especially as this year marks the anniversary of the Hillsborough disaster. It is clear that safety

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must be paramount and a disaster like this must never happen again. There are still safety problems with seating. New technology is being piloted in other countries to provide safe standing. Sharon Bowles has moved a resolution on this and Don Foster has spoken to Jerry Sutcliffe. If safe standing can be provided in Germany we should provide it here too.

Q2. Andrew Hudson

Is the Parliamentary Party in the Commons committed to repealing the legislation that requires structural changes to principal local authorities in England?

Reply by Paul Burstow MP (Chief Whip)

As Liberal Democrats we feel very strongly that decisions affecting local people should be made locally. The restructuring of local government should be made from the bottom up, not dictated from Whitehall. In the Commons our local government team has persistently argued that Labour has failed to allow local people to make these decisions and has failed to properly consult and listen to local people. We will consider re-appealing the enabling legislation that allows governments to dictate in this way, but we will not be unpicking individual boundary changes. The costs involved are too great in the current times.

Supplementary question

This question comes from the changes to the London and Metropolitan district. Did the Parliamentary Party oppose these changes?

Reply by Paul Burstow MP (Chief Whip)

When it comes to legislation which gives powers to dictate changes we oppose the legislation. We strongly believe that changes at the local level need to be what the local community wants.

Q3. Ronald Heinrich, Cambridge

As the media widely revealed in detail MPs' inappropriate parliamentary expenses, why did the Fees Office massively censor the published information on MPs' expenses? Did the Parliamentary Party and/or MPs object to this and insist on more details being made public?

Reply by Lorely Burt MP (Chair of the Parliamentary Party)

It was quite an amazing contrast when I looked at my blanked-out expenses. There were whole pages blanked out, and this included the whole back pages of invoices. I do not understand why they chose to block out so much, though there were reasons for blocking out some details such as third-party addresses, personal information of staff and bank details. We have very strongly lobbied for more transparency and most of our MPs and all of the Shadow Cabinet have published their expenses for over a year now. The scale of the censorship only became apparent after publication. David Heath has continued to raise this and is continuing to argue for greater transparency.

Supplementary question

It seems the Fees Office missed a tremendous opportunity to correct the errors and misinformation in the press. This censorship seems to be in line with the secrecy in which Parliament works.

Reply by Lorely Burt MP (Chair of the Parliamentary Party)

I completely agree with you and we will take every opportunity to raise the issue of greater transparency.

Q4. Ronald Heinrich, Cambridge

The report is silent on any action taken by the party to promote the radical reform of parliamentary procedures, constitutional and electoral reform apart from MPs' expenses. Why?

Reply by Paul Burstow MP (Chief Whip)

I accept the criticism of the report; it is very hard to cover the breadth of the work being carried out by parliamentarians. In trying to pick out the highlights of the past six months, there is no doubt that parliamentary expenses needed to be covered. Our Leader has been at the forefront of reforming the system, consistent in arguing for Parliament NOT to be exempt from freedom of information legislation, and as a group we have voted strongly for implementing the Kelly recommendations in full. We have been looking at taking big money out of politics and David Howarth moved an amendment to cap all donations at £50,000. Both Labour and the Conservatives voted against this. David Howarth is also on the special select committee looking at how the House itself works. We will be arguing for a radical shift of power away from Whitehall and back to Parliament.

Reply by Lord McNally (Leader of the Liberal Democrats in the House of Lords)

Before the 1997 election, Labour and the Liberal Democrats held a joint commission – the Cook/Maclennan Commission – which looked at constitutional reform. In the first Blair government you could see the influence of the Commission and of the Liberal Democrats in pushing for constitutional change, including freedom of information, the Human Rights Act, devolution for Scotland and Wales and PR for Europe. After 2001, Blair lost interest in constitutional reform, there has been no cross-party discussion and as a result constitutional reform since 2001 has been watered down or not addressed. As for the particular issue of Lords reform, I think it is disgraceful that a three-term majority Labour government has still left the House of Lords unreformed, even though the 1910 reforms were carried out in less time than the current government has left. Within the Lords we are keeping the issue of reform on the agenda, with both David Steel and Matthew Oakeshott using Private Member's Bills to keep the issue of reform alive.

Supplementary question

Do you feel this is a once in a life time opportunity to drag our parliamentarians into the 21st century and do any of you feel this is likely?

Reply by Lord McNally (Leader of the Liberal Democrats in the Lords)

Yes, I think that we have a real opportunity at the moment. Currently people are recognising the link between good governance and constitutional reform. We need to remember that the question of MPs' expenses would not have come to light if a Conservative-inspired amendment to exclude MPs' expenses had not been opposed by the Lords.

Q5. Jonathan Marks

Will our MPs fight to provide an open democratic election in John Bercow's constituency, by immediately proposing an honorary constituency for the Speaker?

Reply by Paul Burstow MP (Chief Whip)

We certainly agree strongly that there is a case that the sitting Speaker's constituents should be able to take part in the general election. I do not want to raise hopes that this can be completed before the next general election.

Supplementary question

Given that this was first proposed fifty years ago by Jeremy Thorpe, and the strength of feeling of John Bercow's constituents, do you not feel that urgent steps need to be taken either in a Westminster Hall debate, through an Early Day Motion or by appealing to John Bercow himself?

Reply by Paul Burstow MP (Chief Whip)

David Howarth MP is serving on the special select committee looking at the special relationship between parliament and the executive.