

CONFERENCE AGENDA - CLEARPRINT

Liberal Democrats Autumn Conference Brighton, 19-22 September 2026

This clear print / large text version of the Conference Agenda matches as closely as possible the text of the published Agenda. Motion line numbers match those in the printed Agenda.

Page number cross references are correct within this clearprint document. Complex layouts and graphics have been omitted.

Welcome to the Liberal Democrat Autumn 2026 Conference Agenda.

For features, general conference information, exhibition and fringe, see the separate Conference Directory.

If you have any questions on-site, please ask a steward or go to the Information Desk in the Brighton Centre.

Further information, registration and conference publications (including plain text and clear print versions) are available at:

www.libdems.org.uk/conference

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Conference at a glance

The **Agenda** section on pages 14–105 of this **Conference Agenda** covers what goes on in the main auditorium – debates on policy and party business. You'll see a timetable for the debates on pages 14–15, then each agenda item is listed, including the motion that is to be debated. There is also a description of how debates are conducted, and how you can participate, on pages 8–11.

Standing orders, on pages 106–125, are the rules that govern the policy and party business that is debated in the auditorium, relating to how motions and amendments are chosen for debate, how the sessions are conducted and more. There is a useful glossary to help understand some of the terms used.

General **information** to help you make the most of conference, and details of the **Fringe** and **Training** programme and the **exhibition**, can be found in the **Conference Directory**.

Conference Extra is published a few days before conference and will be available online. It contains details of the amendments to motions and emergency motions selected, and any last-minute changes to the **Agenda**. Please make sure you read it!

Conference Daily will be issued each day at conference and will be available both online and in print. It will contain all the last-minute information relevant to that day's business.

Conference venue

Brighton Centre, King's Road, Brighton BN1 2GR

Please note that the Brighton Centre is within the secure zone and that access is only possible with a valid conference pass.

Conference hotel

The Grand Brighton, 97–99 King's Road, Brighton BN1 2FW

DoubleTree by Hilton Brighton Metropole, King's Road, Brighton BN1 2FU (20-21 September)

What's on the agenda?

The agenda for each conference is decided by the Federal Conference Committee (FCC), which is elected every three years by party members. About twelve weeks before each conference, they meet to decide which of the motions submitted by party members, local parties and party committees should be accepted. Each conference contains a mix of different items –

Debates on policy and business motions

Debates on policy and business motions are at the heart of federal conference. It is through them that the party sets its policy and future direction. Unlike in other parties, Liberal Democrat conference is sovereign, and what members decide really matters.

A **policy motion** decides the policy of the party – what the Liberal Democrats would do if we were in government, or what the current government should do. The manifesto for the general election is drawn up by the Federal Policy Committee (FPC) from amongst the policies decided by conference. Motions submitted by the FPC are usually accompanied by detailed policy papers on major areas of policy; the motion summarises the paper's proposals.

A **business motion** sets the strategy or decides organisational matters such as subscription rates.

Motions can also be submitted to amend the party's constitution or conference standing orders.

Amendments: all the motions in this agenda are still open to amendment. The FCC will meet a week before conference to select amendments for debate from amongst those submitted. Those accepted will be published in *Conference Extra* and repeated in the relevant *Conference Daily*.

Emergency motions

Emergency motions are debated and voted on and make formal party policy like other motions, but must derive from a substantial development that took place after deadline for the submission of motions (24 June).

There are slots for emergency motions at F33 on Monday 21 September and F34 on Tuesday 22 September.

Emergency motions that are in order will either be placed on the agenda by the FCC or included in a ballot for voting members to choose between. The motions for selection by ballot will be printed in *Conference Extra*. The emergency motions ballot will be held electronically. Members of conference will receive a ballot by email at 17.00 on Friday 18 September, and should complete it online by 16.00 on Saturday 19 September.

Topical issue discussions

Topical issue discussions are discussions on policy issues live at the time of conference on which the party is not yet ready to adopt a position; they conclude without a vote. If any are selected, they will be timetabled during the emergency motion slots.

Any party member may submit a suggested topic for a discussion; it will be considered by officers of the FCC and FPC. If a topical issue discussion is selected, it will be published in *Conference Extra* and the relevant *Conference Daily*.

Reports

Reports from the Federal Committees and Parliamentary Parties are an essential part of party accountability; they are printed in the separate reports document.

Any voting member may submit concise questions on these reports. Questions may be submitted by 13.00 on Monday 7 September using the online form at:

www.libdems.org.uk/conference_submissions

Questions received by the deadline above will be published in *Conference Extra* and are guaranteed a reply, in the session or in writing thereafter. Questions may also be submitted using the same online form until one hour before the start of the relevant session, but will only be called if time allows and at the discretion of the chair of the session.

Question & answer sessions

A question and answer session is timetabled for the Leader at F19, on the Sunday afternoon. Any party member can submit a question.

Questions may be submitted by 13.00 Monday 7 September using the online form at:

www.libdems.org.uk/conference_submissions

Questions may also be submitted on a form collected from and returned to the Speakers' Table in the auditorium by 12.05 Sunday 20 September.

Set-piece speeches

The agenda also contains a number of set-piece speeches, from parliamentary spokespeople, leading councillors, Scottish and Welsh Liberal Democrats or sometimes speakers from Liberal parties overseas.

Conference Extra and Conference Daily

Conference Extra and *Conference Daily* are available at:

www.libdems.org.uk/conference_papers

and via the Conference App.

Follow the auditorium live:

www.libdems.org.uk/conference-live

Agenda Information

Debates and Votes at Conference

Debates on policy and business motions follow a standard pattern:

Proposer of the motion speaks

V

Proposers of any amendments speak in turn

V

Speakers called on all sides of the debate
with the chair seeking to ensure balance

V

Summators of amendments speak in turn

V

The summator of the motion speaks

V

The chair takes votes for and against the amendments
and separate votes (if any) in turn

V

A vote will be taken on the motion as a whole

Some debates may feature one or more of the following:

Counted vote: the chair of the session may decide that a vote needs to be counted. Any voting member may request a count from the floor; if fifty voting members stand and show their voting cards, a count will be taken.

Interventions: concise (one-minute) speeches made from the intervention microphone(s) on the floor of the auditorium, during debates where indicated in the Agenda.

Reference back: a proposal to refer a motion or amendment to a named body of the party for further consideration. (See page xx).

Separate votes: a vote to delete or retain the specified words or section of a motion or amendment.

Agenda Information cont.

A request for a separate vote may be submitted by any party member by:

- 09.00 Thursday 17 September for debates scheduled for Saturday 19 September; or by:
- 09.00 Saturday 19 September for debates scheduled for Sunday 20 September; or by:
- 09.00 Sunday 20 September for debates scheduled for Monday 21 September; or by:
- 09.00 Monday 21 September for debates scheduled for Tuesday 22 September.

The request for a separate vote should be submitted using the online form at:

www.libdems.org.uk/conference_submissions

or in writing to the Speakers' Table in the auditorium.

Communications with the chair and aide: the chair and aide team can be contacted at conference – solely for formal communication on procedural motions and points of order, via the Speakers' Desk or via the link:

www.libdems.org.uk/procedural-motions

Voting: decisions on most motions and all amendments and separate votes are by simple majority of those voting (2/3 majority for constitutional and standing order amendments). To vote, voting members must show their voting pass whilst seated on the ground floor of the auditorium.

We want to hear from you!

We will be sending round a feedback survey link soon.
Please let us know about your experience of Conference.

Agenda Information cont.

Speaking and Voting at Conference

Eligibility to speak and vote

All party members attending in person are entitled to speak and vote in conference debates, providing they are attending conference as a party member (and not, for example, an exhibitor or observer). Party members fulfilling these criteria are known as 'voting members'.

Length of speeches

The length of speeches is shown against each motion in the Agenda.

There are three lights on the speaker's rostrum and visible either side of the stage. The green light comes on at the beginning of the speech. The amber light comes on 60 seconds before the end of the allowed time (20 seconds before the end of an intervention). The red light comes on when all the time is used up, and the speaker must stop immediately.

Applying to speak

To make a speech in a debate you must:

- Complete a speaker's card, collected from and returned to the Speakers' Table at the front of the auditorium, an auditorium steward or the Information Desk; or
- Submit an electronic speaker's card, from Monday 14 September up to one hour before the start of the debate, online at:

www.libdems.org.uk/speakers-card

Completing a speaker's card

When completing a speaker's card, remember:

1 Submit your card well in advance

The chair and aide team for the debate will meet well in advance to look at the speaker's cards submitted and plan the debate – sometimes the previous day.

Agenda Information cont.

2 Fill in your card completely

Complete the back of the card as well as the front. These sections are needed for the chair and aide to balance the debate, so they can call people with relevant experience and avoid a string of people making the same point.

3 Make sure it's readable!

Don't fill every square centimetre of the card, and write legibly – the easier you make it for the chair and aide to read your card the more likely you will be called.

Interventions

To speak during interventions, voting members should complete an intervention form, collected from and returned to a steward in the auditorium. Speakers will be chosen by the chair of the session at random.

Submitting Amendments, Emergency Motions, Requests for a Reference Back and Appeals

Amendments, emergency motions and requests for a reference back

Amendments, emergency motions and requests for a reference back must be:

- Signed by 10 party members; or
- Submitted by one or more of: a local party, state party, regional party in England, Affiliated Organisation or Federal Party Committee.

And must be submitted by 13.00 Monday 7 September online at:

www.libdems.org.uk/conference_submissions

Agenda Information cont.

Submitters should include:

- For amendments – a short explanation of the intended effect of the amendment.
- For emergency motions – a short explanation of its emergency nature; it must derive from an event that took place after the deadline for ordinary motions (24 June).
- For requests for a reference back – the details of the body to whom the motion is to be referred and a statement of the reasons for the reference back, including reasons why voting against the motion would not achieve a similar result, not exceeding 150 words. (In exceptional circumstances, the chair of the debate shall have discretion to accept a request for a reference back if it is received in writing after the deadline).

Topical issues

Suggestions for topical issues may be submitted by any party member by 13.00 Monday 7 September online at:

www.libdems.org.uk/conference_submissions

The title of the issue should be no more than ten words, and should not include an expression of opinion; please include full contact details of the submitter and up to 100 words explanatory background.

Drafting advice

Submitters are encouraged to use our drafting advice service: draft amendments and emergency motions should be submitted by 13.00 Monday 24 August online at:

www.libdems.org.uk/conference_submissions

Appeals

If you wish to appeal against the FCC's decision not to select your emergency motion or amendment, follow these instructions.

Agenda Information cont.

The appeal should come from the email address of the original contact for the motion and should be no longer than one side of A4.

It should explain why you are appealing and any new information the FCC was unaware of when it made its decision.

The email should also contain a contact name and telephone number.

Appeals should be emailed by 09.00 Thursday 17 September to:

appeals@libdems.org.uk

Further information, registration and Conference publications (including plain text and clear print versions) are available at:

www.libdems.org.uk/conference

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All Consultative Sessions marked with # in the index take place outside of the Auditorium. Please see page 33 for full details.

Sunday 20 September

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Monday 21 September cont.

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15.30		Close of Conference	

**Spring Conference Timetable,
York 19-21 March 2027**

Drafting advice deadline (motions)	13.00	Wed, 16 Dec 2026
Motions deadline	13.00	Wed, 13 Jan 2027
Drafting advice deadline (amendments, emergency motions)	13.00	Mon, 22 Feb 2027
Deadline for amendments to motions, emergency motions topical issues, questions to reports	13.00	Mon, 8 March 2027

Saturday 19 September

09.00 Party Business

Chair: Dr Chris Adams (Vice Chair, FCC); Aide: Eleanor Kelly (Vice Chair, FCC); Hall Aide: Cllr Callum Robertson

- F1 Opening of Conference by Josh Babarinde MP,
President of the Liberal Democrats, and Cllr Jay
Mercer, Leader of West Sussex County Council**

09.10 Party Business

Chair: Dr Chris Adams (Vice Chair, FCC); Aide: Eleanor Kelly (Vice Chair, FCC); Hall Aide: Cllr Callum Robertson

F2 Federal Conference Committee Report

Mover: Cllr Nick da Costa (Chair, Federal Conference Committee)

The deadline for questions for F2 is 13.00 on Monday 7 September. Questions selected will be published in Conference Extra and Saturday's Conference Daily. These questions will be guaranteed an answer, either in the session or in writing thereafter. Questions may also be submitted up until 08.10 Saturday 19 September; such questions are only taken at the discretion of the chair. See page 10 for further information.

F3 Federal Policy Committee Report

Mover: Cllr Mohsin Khan (Vice Chair, Federal Policy Committee)

See notes to F2.

Saturday 19 September cont.

09.25 Policy motion

Chair: Chloe Hutchinson; Aide: Alison Jenner; Hall Aide: Chris Maines

F4 Mortality of Children in Temporary Accommodation

14 members

Mover: Gideon Amos MP (Spokesperson for Housing and Planning)

Summation: Cllr Victoria Wilson

1 Conference notes that:

2 i) There are over 176,000 children living in temporary
3 accommodation across England.

4 ii) Mould, damp, rodent infestations, disrepair and electrical
5 faults characterise too much low-quality temporary
6 accommodation, which is also often inaccessible to
7 children with extra needs and which is actively harming
8 the health and wellbeing of children.

9 iii) Families in Temporary Accommodation are being forced to
10 share kitchen and/or bathroom facilities with single
11 adults, placing children at risk from inappropriate
12 behaviour, substance abuse and violence.

13 iv) The crisis has led to thousands of households being
14 moved out of their local authority area away from support
15 networks, detrimentally impacting children's lives,
16 particularly when their schools and GPs change while they
17 try to carry on with everyday life in an unfamiliar location
18 away from their peers.

19 v) Families often have less than 24 hours' notice of being
20 required to move, whilst the Children's Commissioner
21 found that the more moves a child experiences, the less
22 likely they are to achieve at least five GCSEs.

23 vi) Since 2019, 104 children have died with temporary
24 accommodation listed as a contributing factor to their
25 death, 76 of whom were under the age of one, with
26 deaths attributed to causes including lack of access to cots

Saturday 19 September cont.

27 and Moses baskets, overcrowding, poverty and the chaos
28 of homelessness.

29 vii) Living in temporary accommodation violates some of the
30 most basic rights of the United Nations Convention on the
31 Rights of the Child, including the right to life, the right to
32 play and the right to privacy.

33 viii) A high proportion of Temporary Accommodation is within
34 Permitted Development conversions of office, commercial
35 and storage buildings with no requirements for outdoor
36 or play space or even for any outward-facing window.

37 Conference reaffirms the Liberal Democrat commitment to:

38 a) Every child having the best possible start in life and
39 incorporating the UN Convention on the Rights of the
40 Child into UK law.

41 b) Exempting groups of homeless people, and those at risk
42 of homelessness, from the Shared Accommodation Rate.

43 c) Building 150,000 social rent homes per year and to
44 binding targets for affordable and social housing set by
45 the local authority, which would be allowed to build its
46 own social and affordable housing to meet its targets,
47 using borrowing to do so.

48 Conference therefore calls on the Government to:

49 1. Commit to ending child mortality where temporary
50 accommodation is a contributing factor to death.

51 2. Ensure the essential needs of every child for education,
52 health services and an adequate standard of living are
53 met.

54 3. Ensure every child has their best interests taken into
55 account when decisions are made about them or for them
56 by public bodies, including a presumption of not removing
57 them from their local area unless it is in their interests to
58 do so.

59 4. Reduce the number of children living in temporary
60 accommodation through the more ambitious Liberal

Saturday 19 September cont.

- 61 Democrat target for building 150,000 social homes per
62 year and by giving councils the power to end right-to-buy
63 in their area.
- 64 5. Establish minimum standards for outdoor space and
65 natural light for all new homes, including those created
66 through permitted development orders, and take powers
67 to require existing conversions to be remediated.
- 68 6. Require routine inspections of properties used as
69 temporary accommodation, and provide cots or Moses
70 baskets to all children under the age of two in temporary
71 accommodation and to ensure no child is raised in
72 accommodation without cooking facilities.
- 73 7. End the mixing of single adults and families in
74 accommodation with shared bathroom and/or kitchen
75 facilities.

Applicability: England except for a) which is Federal.

Mover: 5 minutes; all other speakers: 3 minutes. For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see page 10.

The deadline for amendments to this motion is 13.00 Monday 7 September; see pages 11-12. Those selected for debate will be printed in Conference Extra and Saturday's Conference Daily. The deadline for requests for separate votes is 09.00 Thursday 17 September; see page 9.

09.55 Policy motion

Chair: Lord Mohammed; Aide: Paul McGarry; Hall Aide: Duncan Brack

F5 Securing the Future of Rural and Coastal Education

14 members

Mover: Caroline Voaden MP (Spokesperson for Schools)

Summation: Cllr Lucy Nethsingha

Saturday 19 September cont.

- 1 Conference notes:
- 2 A. Research from the Education Policy Institute which found
- 3 that a falling birthrate has created a drop in pupil demand
- 4 that exposes up to 800 primary schools across England to
- 5 potential closure by 2029.
- 6 B. 68 per cent of teacher trainees in more rural areas like
- 7 Cornwall require family support during their traineeship,
- 8 and 78 per cent of trainees require a car to get to
- 9 placements.
- 10 C. Since the academic year 2014/15, teachers in small rural
- 11 schools have left the profession or moved to schools in
- 12 other areas at a higher rate than those in urban areas.
- 13 D. That the Government’s removal of the Rural Services
- 14 Delivery Grant has made it harder for local authorities to
- 15 deliver rural services, including education.
- 16 E. Children in rural areas enjoy fewer enrichment activities,
- 17 educational visits and work experience opportunities.
- 18 F. That the Labour Government’s rollout of the ‘Coastal
- 19 Challenge’ is deeply limited in scope and, unlike the
- 20 historic London Challenge upon which it is inspired, is
- 21 entirely unsupported by dedicated funding.
- 22 G. Government data collection on coastal and rural schools
- 23 remains inadequate to understanding the unique
- 24 challenges of delivering a rural education.
- 25 Conference believes that:
- 26 i) Every child, regardless of their postcode, deserves access
- 27 to a world-class education and a thriving local school.
- 28 ii) Coastal and rural schools are the heartbeat of their
- 29 communities, and supporting them is essential to
- 30 ensuring the vibrant social fabric of smaller towns and
- 31 villages.
- 32 iii) Existing funding mechanisms fail to recognise the realities
- 33 of coastal and rural geographies, unfairly penalising small
- 34 schools for unavoidable and structurally higher per-pupil

Saturday 19 September cont.

- 35
- delivery costs.
- 36
- iv) Resolving the teacher retention crisis in isolated regions
- 37
- requires building sustainable local career pathways for
- 38
- local people and existing school support staff, rather than
- 39
- solely depending on graduate relocation schemes.
- 40
- Conference reaffirms Liberal Democrat pledges to:
- 41
- A. Commit to conducting trials of mobile youth work teams,
- 42
- which either use existing local hubs or mobile facilities, as
- 43
- decided by the relevant local authority.
- 44
- B. Increase school and college funding per pupil above the
- 45
- rate of inflation every year.
- 46
- Conference calls on the Government to invest in coastal and
- 47
- rural schools by:
- 48
1. Conducting an immediate review of the Dedicated Schools
- 49
- Grant to ensure that the national funding formula fully
- 50
- reflects the higher per-pupil costs of educating pupils in
- 51
- coastal and rural areas.
- 52
2. Ensuring that any review recognises sparsity and rurality
- 53
- as distinct funding variables, and allows for local
- 54
- adjustments within local authorities where data is reliable
- 55
- and rollout is feasible.
- 56
3. Improving data coordination and collection between the
- 57
- Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and
- 58
- the Department for Education (DfE) on rural and coastal
- 59
- schools so that definitions of rural and urban are reflected
- 60
- in DfE data.
- 61
4. Enabling school leaders to plan ahead by ensuring they
- 62
- are sighted on DfE's funding strategy beyond annual
- 63
- funding settlements.
- 64
5. Piloting local 'Grow Your Own' talent pipelines through a
- 65
- teacher apprenticeship scheme specifically targeted at
- 66
- rural and coastal areas, and providing a dedicated, funded
- 67
- pathway for local teaching assistants and support staff to
- 68
- transition into fully qualified teachers.

Saturday 19 September cont.

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6. Encouraging educators to work in coastal and rural settings by introducing a targeted teacher recruitment and retention incentive, including a stipulated financial bonus for educators who commit to teaching in the most rural schools for a set number of years.
7. Supporting local education authorities and multi-academy trusts who wish to lengthen the school day in order to deliver enrichment activities, and working with transport companies to ensure there are sufficient travel options near schools which elect to do so.
8. Establishing a Rural School Transport Guarantee, beginning with a reinstatement of a ring-fenced rurality payment to local authorities for maintaining specific bus routes used by schoolchildren, with the aim of equalising rural per capita bus funding on these specific routes when the public finances allow.
9. Launching the ‘Rural and Coastal School Network’ as a genuinely national scheme to drive up standards in under-served regions, fostering collaboration and sharing best practices across participating areas, with funding to back it up.
10. Implementing a ‘presumption against closure’ rule for good and outstanding rural and coastal schools, requiring local authorities or academies to produce a community impact assessment as part of the off-rolling process.
11. Creating dedicated teams within DfE which support schools with falling pupil rolls to utilise their spare space for commercial and community purposes.
12. Piloting twinning initiatives between rural, coastal and urban schools, drawing on the expertise of rural and coastal schools to deliver outdoor education experiences for students from urban areas, and in return, enabling children from rural areas to enjoy the cultural opportunities available in urban areas.

Applicability: England.

Mover: 7 minutes; summation of motion and movers and summation

Saturday 19 September cont.

of any amendments: 4 minutes; all other speakers: 3 minutes. For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see page 10.

The deadline for amendments to this motion is 13.00 Monday 7 September; see pages 11-12. Those selected for debate will be printed in Conference Extra and Saturday's Conference Daily. The deadline for requests for separate votes is 09.00 Thursday 17 September; see page 9.

10.40 Policy motion

Chair: Baroness Pinnock; Aide: Cllr Gareth Epps; Hall Aide: Lord Pack

F6 Liberal Democrats Mean Business

14 members

Mover: Daisy Cooper MP (Spokesperson for the Treasury)

Summation: Sarah Olney MP (Spokesperson for Business)

- 1 Conference believes that:
- 2 A. Business is Britain's engine of national prosperity: it
- 3 creates good jobs, fosters thriving local areas, drives
- 4 innovation and helps fund public services.
- 5 B. Business is also the vehicle enabling millions of people to
- 6 create something new, make the most of their own skills
- 7 and talents and build a new community.
- 8 C. The Liberal Democrats are the natural party of business,
- 9 as the only truly internationalist, pro-enterprise and
- 10 fiscally responsible political force, advocating for a
- 11 mutually beneficial partnership between the public and
- 12 private sector.
- 13 D. Liberals have always championed free trade, fair markets
- 14 and dynamic enterprise, while enabling people to have a
- 15 meaningful stake in the rewards of economic growth.
- 16 Conference notes that:
- 17 i) Britain's businesses have been failed by Labour's two anti-

Saturday 19 September cont.

- 18 growth budgets and years of Conservative Party
19 mismanagement, culminating in the mini-Budget of 2022.
- 20 ii) The Labour Government has saddled businesses,
21 especially high street SMEs, with an unfair jobs tax and
22 damaging business rates hikes.
- 23 iii) Business is now threatened by Nigel Farage, who
24 masterminded the shambolic Brexit deal and is more
25 interested in cheering on Donald Trump's chaotic tariff
26 wars and promoting the interests of his bitcoin billionaire
27 backers than backing British families and firms.
- 28 iv) Barriers to accessing finance are forcing start-ups and
29 scale-ups to go overseas to raise capital.
- 30 v) The UK's tax system was not built for a modern economy
31 of software, intellectual property and intangible assets,
32 and it holds back innovation and companies with potential
33 for high growth.
- 34 vi) Tax compliance costs small businesses an estimated £25
35 billion a year, with the average firm losing 44 hours and
36 £4,500 to form-filling.
- 37 vii) Youth unemployment is undermining a whole generation,
38 while sectors that provide many people's first jobs, such as
39 hospitality, are under mounting pressure.
- 40 viii) Labour's Employment Rights Act failed to strike the right
41 balance, putting disproportionate burdens on businesses
42 while introducing only limited improvements for workers.
- 43 ix) Liberal Democrats secured a six-month qualifying period
44 for protection from unfair dismissal in the Employment
45 Rights Act, a fair and balanced result for businesses and
46 workers.
- 47 Conference reaffirms Liberal Democrat commitments to:
- 48 a) Build an economy that works for everyone, fostering
49 diverse business ownership models – including mutuals,
50 social enterprises and community interest companies.
- 51 b) Tackle the productivity crisis by encouraging businesses to

Saturday 19 September cont.

52 invest in training, take up digital technologies and become
53 more energy efficient.

54 Conference therefore resolves to back British business to get
55 Britain growing again, end the cost-of-living crisis and raise
56 people’s living standards for the long term.

57 Conference further calls on the Government to:

58 1. Create a ‘one-stop-shop’ for businesses with government,
59 by splitting the Treasury into a new Department for
60 Growth and a Department for Public Expenditure; merging
61 the current Department for Business and Trade into the
62 new Department for Growth; and ensuring that
63 businesses each have a single account manager, and that
64 policies affecting business are aligned across
65 departments.

66 2. Launch an ambitious drive to cut the bureaucratic burden
67 on British businesses, especially SMEs, streamlining and
68 consolidating regulation, providing better guidance and
69 information through the Department for Growth ‘one-
70 stop-shop’ – while safeguarding consumer protections,
71 workers' rights and EU alignment.

72 3. Conduct a rolling impact assessment keeping track of the
73 cumulative tax burden on small businesses, especially
74 those with high staff and premises costs such as
75 hospitality, retail accommodation and attractions.

76 4. Create clear incentives for businesses to recruit and train
77 young people, including urgently reinstating a lower
78 National Insurance Contributions rate for part-time
79 workers, including young people.

80 5. Improve access to finance, including by raising the Venture
81 Capital Trusts limit and Seed Enterprise Investment
82 Scheme limit, which at £250,000 barely covers today’s
83 startup costs, so founders can grow in the UK, not
84 overseas.

85 6. Back innovative scale-ups by extending full expensing to
86 intangibles such as software and intellectual property, and
87 draw from the Dutch and South African R&D pre-clearance

Saturday 19 September cont.

- 88 systems in which claims are assessed upfront by scientists
89 and engineers, not tax compliance teams.
- 90 7. Commit to championing competition and regulatory
91 changes to tackle high energy prices affecting small
92 businesses, including making energy contracts more
93 transparent and expanding access to the Energy
94 Ombudsman for all SMEs.
- 95 8. Give workers a stronger voice in designing companies' AI-
96 adoption policies, and in making the most of AI job
97 augmentation, by championing employee representation
98 on company boards for large and UK-listed companies.
- 99 9. Recognise the unique contribution of family businesses to
100 long-term growth, noting their focus on long-term
101 stewardship and community engagement, and ensure
102 banks understand family governance models, so they can
103 offer family firms the types of growth capital they need.

Applicability: Federal.

Mover: 7 minutes; summation of motion and movers and summation of any amendments: 4 minutes; all other speakers: 3 minutes. For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see page 10.

The deadline for amendments to this motion is 13.00 Monday 7 September; see pages 11-12. Those selected for debate will be printed in Conference Extra and Saturday's Conference Daily. The deadline for requests for separate votes is 09.00 Thursday 17 September; see page 9.

11.35 Speech

Chair: Charley Hasted; Aide: Lord Pack

F7 AI Pinkerton MP (Spokesperson for Europe)

Saturday 19 September cont.

11.50 Policy motion

Chair: Cllr Nick da Costa (Chair, FCC); Aide: Jess Brown-Fuller MP;
Hall Aide: Cllr Sandra Gidley

F8 Tackling the Maternity Crisis

14 members

Mover: Helen Morgan MP (Spokesperson for Health and
 Social Care)

Summation: To be announced

- 1 Conference notes that:
- 2 i) Maternal deaths in the UK are higher than at any point in
- 3 the last decade.
- 4 ii) 65 per cent of maternity units are not safe to give birth in,
- 5 according to the Care Quality Commission, and the
- 6 Commission has stated that they are "concerned about
- 7 the potential normalising of serious harm in maternity".
- 8 iii) Shortages of experienced staff, including specialist
- 9 doctors and senior midwives, especially at night, has been
- 10 repeatedly identified as a source of failure in maternity,
- 11 including in landmark maternity investigations such as the
- 12 Ockenden report into failings at Shrewsbury and Telford
- 13 Hospital Trust.
- 14 iv) Maternity represents the largest share of clinical
- 15 negligence payments, at £1.3 billion a year.
- 16 v) Reviews into maternity have come up with more than 700
- 17 recommendations in the past decade, but improvements
- 18 have been limited.
- 19 vi) There have been repeated investigations into maternity
- 20 services in recent years, often uncovering similar failings,
- 21 including most recently the Nottingham, Leeds and Sussex
- 22 investigations and the national Amos Review.
- 23 Conference believes that:
- 24 A. Britain should be the safest country in the world in which
- 25 to have a baby.

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- 26 B. Every maternity unit should meet ‘good’ or ‘outstanding’
27 standards of safety.
- 28 C. No woman should face injury or trauma due to unsafe
29 healthcare.
- 30 D. There should be sufficient staff to ensure mothers benefit
31 from the greatest possible safety and choice during
32 pregnancy and labour.

33 Conference calls for:

- 34 I. Every maternity unit to be brought up to good levels of
35 safety through:
 - 36 a) Consultant obstetricians to be present on every labour
37 ward 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
 - 38 b) One-to-one midwifery care for every woman in labour.
- 39 II. A capital investment programme that:
 - 40 a) Brings every maternity and neonatal unit up to good
41 condition; this should include renovation of the 42 per
42 cent of units in need of major repair and immediately
43 starting repairs in the 7 per cent of units that run a risk
44 of imminent breakdown.
 - 45 b) Delivers new dedicated bereavement suites.
 - 46 c) Invests in high-quality equipment that reduces the rate
47 of injury, including identifying and developing new
48 tools such as air cuff alternatives to forceps.

49 Conference additionally calls for:

- 50 1. A national Maternity Commissioner to oversee improved
51 standards of care.
- 52 2. Mandatory, regularly updated, salaried training each year
53 that:
 - 54 a) Includes foetal monitoring and emergency procedures
55 for all maternity staff.
 - 56 b) Includes 52 hours’ salaried training time for midwives,
57 as recommended by the Royal College of Midwives.

Saturday 19 September cont.

- 58 c) Clearly communicates a shared understanding of
59 safety, with focused training for those in leadership
60 roles in building a culture of openness and speaking
61 up.
- 62 3. A Director of Midwifery to be appointed in every maternity
63 service, alongside an extra 300 consultant midwives
64 across the country to help drive clinical excellence.
- 65 4. A restoration of Service Development Funding (£95
66 million), which the Labour Government cut, to support
67 enhanced care for complex pregnancies, multiple births or
68 bereavement care and support.
- 69 5. Guaranteed bereavement specialists and perinatal mental
70 health specialists in every maternity service.
- 71 6. A dedicated neonatal workforce plan which ensures that
72 neonatal teams are properly staffed in every hospital,
73 including the right mix of specialists.
- 74 7. Better support during pregnancy including:
- 75 a) Guaranteed access to preconception services and
76 timely antenatal booking.
- 77 b) Clear referral pathways to support personalised care
78 by multidisciplinary teams from the earliest
79 opportunity to support mothers' safety and
80 preferences.
- 81 8. Review national standards and funding to ensure every
82 mother has access to high-quality antenatal classes,
83 regardless of postcode.
- 84 9. Disparities in maternity care, which particularly impacts
85 black and Asian women, disabled women and women
86 from deprived backgrounds, to be tackled, including
87 through:
- 88 a) Mandatory training on inequalities, including
89 identifying specific risks, such as recognising jaundice
90 or cyanosis in babies with darker skin tones.
- 91 b) A cross-government target and strategy for eliminating

Saturday 19 September cont.

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maternal health disparities, backed by new investment
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in public health.
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10. A systematic review of complaints processes in maternity
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and neonatal care to deliver new national standards,
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including on communication with patients, transparency
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and ease of registering a complaint.
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11. Transparent national monitoring, with clear national
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benchmarks for success, for the hundreds of
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recommendations of the major reviews into maternity
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services in the UK.
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12. All miscarriages to be recorded so that the issue is no
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longer hidden, national targets can be set, and the impact
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of interventions can be measured.
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13. Support and referral including to NHS mental health
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support services to be made available after every
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miscarriage, not just after three.

Applicability: England.

Mover: 7 minutes; summation of motion and movers and summation of any amendments: 4 minutes; all other speakers: 3 minutes. For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see page 10.

In addition to speeches from the platform, voting members will be able to make concise (maximum one-minute) interventions from the floor during the debate on the motion. See pages 10-11 for further information.

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12.50 Lunch break and fringe

Please see the Conference Directory for our fringe and exhibition programme.

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13.00–14.30 Consultative session

Thriving Economy Working Group

Empress Room, Grand Hotel

Chair: Julia Goldsworthy

Consultative sessions provide a less formal mechanism than the full-scale conference debates for conference representatives and other party members to participate in the party's policy- and decision-making process. Each session examines a particular topic and hears contributions from party members and in some cases outside speakers.

This session will be organised by the Thriving Economy Working Group. The conclusions of the session will be taken into account by their group in drawing up its final draft paper for the Federal Policy Committee.

14.10 Policy motion

Chair: Dr Chris Adams (Vice Chair, FCC); Aide: Lord Mohammed;
Hall Aide: Eleanor Kelly (Vice Chair, FCC)

F9

Strength, Resilience and Partnership: Securing Britain and Defending Liberalism in Turbulent Times
(International Security Policy Paper)

Federal Policy Committee

Mover: Calum Miller MP (Spokesperson for Foreign Affairs)

Summation: Dr Ben Jones (Chair of the Policy Working Group)

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- Conference is deeply concerned that the critical assumptions that have shaped the security policy of the United Kingdom since the end of the Cold War can no longer be taken for granted; a period of relative stability in international politics has given way to one of deep uncertainty, upheaval, and turbulent change caused by:
- A. Russia’s brutal and illegal invasion of Ukraine, wider disregard for international law, destabilising actions and threats to the security and democratic integrity of other states, which have undermined an already fragile post-Cold War European security settlement.

Saturday 19 September cont.

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- B. President Trump’s dangerous and intentional disregard for the multilateral international order that his predecessors helped to shape, including his direct threats to the territorial integrity of the UK’s close allies ,Canada and Denmark and his desire to ‘punish’ European allies over lack of support for his war with Iran, which has severely undermined decades of deep trust and interdependence between the US and the UK.
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- C. China’s ambition to become the dominant global power through its control of critical minerals and technological advances, creating systemic vulnerabilities for Britain’s national security, including through supply chain dependencies and risks to critical infrastructure.
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- Conference understands that the UK faces urgent and stark challenges driven by heightened great-power competition, rapid technological advances, climate change and the erosion of respect for long-standing democratic norms, international law and multilateral institutions.
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- Conference believes that it is therefore necessary to rethink how best to protect British national security interests and advance our Liberal values in this unfamiliar environment, and that the UK needs an international security policy that is both robust and adaptable to the broad range of circumstances that may emerge from the present upheaval.
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- Conference notes that on leaving office, the Conservatives left the armed forces in a parlous state and the UK’s relations with the European Union deeply damaged.
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- Conference supports the analysis and aims of the recent Strategic Defence Review, but is deeply disappointed by the Government’s lack of urgency and vigour in providing adequate funding and pursuing the necessary changes to national security policy.
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- Conference therefore endorses policy paper 164, *Strength, Resilience and Partnership: Securing Britain and Defending Liberalism in Turbulent Times*, and in particular its policies to:
- 47
1. Strengthen UK defences by:

Saturday 19 September cont.

- 48 a) Maintaining and deepening British support to Ukraine,
49 including through continued financial, diplomatic and
50 military support.
- 51 b) Ensuring that the armed forces, to whom the Liberal
52 Democrats remain hugely grateful for their dedication
53 and sacrifice, are properly equipped and trained to
54 deal with the challenges of a rapidly evolving defence
55 and security environment, particularly those related to
56 game-changing technological advances.
- 57 c) Meeting the NATO spending target of 3.5 per cent of
58 GDP on core defence requirements and a further 1.5
59 per cent on 'defence and security-related spending' by
60 2035, and reaching 3 per cent by 2030, recognising
61 that this will require difficult fiscal choices.
- 62 d) Kickstarting investment in the regeneration of the
63 armed forces by raising £20 billion through the sale of
64 defence bonds.
- 65 e) Ensuring that additional resources for defence are not
66 wasted by increasing transparency, scrutiny and
67 accountability of the Ministry of Defence, including
68 through new bodies such as a dedicated House of
69 Commons Defence Public Accounts Committee.
- 70 f) Conducting a full assessment of the degree to which
71 UK military capabilities need in the medium-to-long
72 term to be fully sovereign, developed and operated
73 with allies or acquired internationally 'off-the-shelf'.
- 74 2. Work more closely with the UK's European allies towards
75 these aims by:
 - 76 a) Seeking to join the European Single Market, which
77 would provide enhanced access to, and greater
78 influence over, EU defence capability funding and
79 development programmes.
 - 80 b) Supporting pooling, sharing and specialisation
81 initiatives for military capabilities where appropriate to
82 increase the effectiveness and efficiency of European
83 defence spending.

Saturday 19 September cont.

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- c) Proposing the creation of a European Security Council that would provide strategic leadership on defence industrial rationalisation and the joint development and operation of military capabilities, in order to better support the delivery of NATO’s operational requirements.
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- d) Seeking UK involvement in EU military and civilian missions and deepening long-term EU-UK cooperation via diplomatic and military exchange programmes.
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3. Build national resilience by:
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- a) Establishing a new Civil Defence Office to coordinate and strengthen whole-of-society resilience.
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- b) Creating a new Civil Volunteer Reserve to ensure that necessary skills can be made available to a national effort at short notice.
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- c) Building whole-of-society resilience with a national conversation to raise public awareness of what is at stake.
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- d) Ensuring that the UK meets its resilience commitments to NATO under Article 3 of the North Atlantic Treaty.
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4. Defend the principle and practice of multilateralism by:
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- a) Defending global institutions and norms which are critical to Britain’s national security and prosperity.
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- b) Working with Canada and other like-minded ‘middle powers’ to develop an effective cooperation mechanism as a counterweight to states seeking to undermine multilateralism and the international rules-based order.
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- c) Prioritising and injecting greater urgency into efforts to strengthen or develop international agreements on new technologies, including autonomous weapons, and on risks relating to the use of space, and on effective global governance relating to AI that protects the safety and security of British citizens.

Saturday 19 September cont.

- 118
- d) Pushing polar and maritime security issues higher up
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- domestic and international agendas.

Applicability: Federal.

Mover and summation combined: 16 minutes; mover and summation of amendments: 4 minutes; all other speakers: 3 minutes. For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see page 10.

In addition to speeches from the platform, voting members will be able to make concise (maximum one-minute) interventions from the floor during the debate on the motion. See pages 10-11 for further information.

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16.00 Speech

Chair: Cllr Callum Robertson; Aide: Cllr Sandra Gidley

F10 Munira Wilson MP (Spokesperson for Education, Children and Families)

16.15 Policy motion

Chair: Jennie Rigg; Aide; Baroness Pinnock; Hall Aide: Dr Chris Adams (Vice Chair, FCC)

F11 Rebuilding Health Visiting and Giving Every Child the Best Start in Life

Twickenham & Richmond

Mover: Cllr Tam Langley

Summation: Sarah Olney MP

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- Conference notes that:
- 2
- I. The first 1,001 days of a child's life are critical to lifelong
- 3
- physical health, mental health, educational attainment

Saturday 19 September cont.

- 4 and life chances.
- 5 II. Health visitors provide a universal frontline public health
- 6 service for babies, young children and families, playing a
- 7 vital role in:
- 8 a) Safeguarding children and preventing childhood
- 9 accidents and unintentional injuries.
- 10 b) Preventing unnecessary visits to Accident &
- 11 Emergency (with babies under 12 months having the
- 12 highest rate of A&E attendance).
- 13 c) Supporting infant feeding.
- 14 d) Identifying and supporting infant and early child
- 15 mental health issues.
- 16 e) Identifying developmental delay.
- 17 f) Reducing health inequalities.
- 18 g) Relieving pressure on GPs, hospitals and social care.
- 19 III. The Institute of Health Visiting's 2024 UK Survey Report,
- 20 *From Disparity to Opportunity: The case for rebuilding health*
- 21 *visiting*, found:
- 22 a) Rising levels of poverty, perinatal mental illness and
- 23 complex family needs.
- 24 b) Major regional inequalities in access to support.
- 25 c) Severe workforce shortages.
- 26 d) Unsafe caseloads in many areas.
- 27 e) Growing concern among practitioners about
- 28 safeguarding risks.
- 29 IV. The number of health visitors in England has fallen
- 30 dramatically since 2015, despite increasing demand for
- 31 support
- 32 V. There is a significant disparity in health visiting provision
- 33 between England and the other nations of the UK.
- 34 VI. Government has prioritised childcare subsidies for

Saturday 19 September cont.

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- working families, which have grown exponentially in recent years, while budgets for health visiting, healthy baby services and other early intervention services have fallen in real terms.
 - VII. Liberal Democrats have consistently championed prevention, early intervention, mental health support, tackling health inequalities and investment in community healthcare services.
 - VIII. Investing in early years support delivers substantial long-term savings through reduced pressure on acute NHS services, children’s social care, education support services and the criminal justice system.
 - IX. There are arguments that workforce planning should be sufficient to reduce or reverse the need for skill mix and the expectation is that health visitors do more than the statutory offer.
 - X. The DHSC 2026 Healthy Child Programme guidance on commissioning public health nursing services introduces new Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the delivery of health visiting services (ages 0 to 5), which include, for example, additional non-face-to-face contacts that are not part of the statutory offer.
 - Conference believes that:
 - A. Every child deserves the best possible start in life, regardless of family income or postcode.
 - B. Prevention and early intervention are essential to improving public health and reducing long-term costs to public services.
 - C. A strong universal health visiting service is a cornerstone of an effective early years and prevention strategy.
 - D. Families should receive consistent, relationship-based support from qualified health visitors with manageable caseloads.
 - E. Persistent regional disparities in health visiting provision

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- are unacceptable and contribute directly to widening inequalities.
- Conference calls for:
1. A national strategy to rebuild the health visiting workforce, including:
- a) Expanded training places.
- b) Funding for further substantive posts.
- c) Funded return-to-practice schemes.
- d) Improved retention measures.
- e) Workforce planning based on population need, ensuring ongoing continued professional development and a quality-assured programme of training for the workforce.
2. The introduction of nationally recognised safe caseload guidance to protect both families and practitioners.
3. Increased and ring-fenced public health funding for local authorities to restore and strengthen universal health visiting services, and for the national rollout of the Healthy Babies programme.
4. A renewed commitment to the Healthy Child Programme, delivered as intended to the expected standards, ensuring that all families receive the full schedule of mandated reviews and evidence-based support.
5. Greater integration between health visiting, maternity services, mental health services, best start family hubs, early years education and children’s social care.
6. The new KPIs should clarify that the practitioner undertaking the statutory offer visit should be a qualified health visitor, not other registered nurses or practitioners.
7. Targeted investment in areas of highest deprivation and the need to reduce inequalities in child health and development outcomes.

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8. Enhanced access to specialist support through health visiting teams for:

a) Perinatal mental health.

b) Domestic abuse.

c) Infant feeding.

d) Speech and language and child development.

e) Parent-infant relationship support.

f) Special Educational Needs and Disabilities, additional needs and neurodiversity.

g) Homelessness and temporary accommodation.

h) Families experiencing poverty.
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9. The collection and publication of robust national data on health visitor numbers, caseloads, outcomes and service access.
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10. Recognition of health visiting as a key part of the Liberal Democrat commitment to shift healthcare towards prevention, community services and early intervention.
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- Conference further calls on Liberal Democrat parliamentarians to campaign for:
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- i) Cross-government action to reduce child poverty and improve family wellbeing.

ii) Long-term and increased investment in early years services as part of a preventive approach to healthcare and social policy.

iii) Better implementation of the ‘Giving every child the best start in life’ strategy by increasing overall funding, extinguishing the postcode lottery (only 75 areas currently get healthy babies funding) and urgently tackling the workforce strategies in health visiting.

Applicability: England.

Mover: 5 minutes; all other speakers: 3 minutes. For eligibility and

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procedure for speaking in this debate, see page 10.

The deadline for amendments to this motion is 13.00 Monday 7 September; see pages 11-12. Those selected for debate will be printed in Conference Extra and Saturday's Conference Daily. The deadline for requests for separate votes is 09.00 Thursday 17 September; see page 9.

16.45 Policy motion

Chair: Baroness Kitching; Aide; Cllr Nick da Costa (Chair, FCC); Hall Aide; Duncan Brack

F12 Fixing Family Courts

12 Party Members.

Mover: Jess Brown-Fuller MP (Spokesperson for Justice)

Summation: To be announced

- 1 Conference notes that:
- 2 i) Private law proceedings, which are between parents or
- 3 family members about child arrangements, were reviewed
- 4 by the 2020 Harm Panel, but many of its 72
- 5 recommendations remain unimplemented.
- 6 ii) The Family Court Reporting and Reform Mechanism
- 7 (FCRRM) pilot, in 2024, found that the structural problems
- 8 identified by the Harm Panel – pro-contact culture,
- 9 adversarialism, lack of resources, and siloed working –
- 10 remain widespread.
- 11 iii) FCRRM data also indicated that domestic abuse is present
- 12 in 73 per cent of hearings and identified in 87 per cent of
- 13 case file reviews.
- 14 iv) Family courts permit evidence from unregulated
- 15 therapists, raising concerns particularly in cases involving
- 16 allegations of parental alienation.
- 17 v) The ‘Pathfinder’ model, now operating in over 20 English
- 18 courts and all Welsh family courts, has been described by
- 19 the President of the Family Division as “more radical, and

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20 far more successful, than even its most ardent supporters
21 would have anticipated”.

22 vi) In March 2026, the Government announced plans to
23 remove the presumption of parental involvement through
24 the Courts and Tribunals Bill.

25 Conference further notes that:

26 I. Public law proceedings, brought by local authorities over
27 child welfare concerns, have not been the subject of a
28 recent comprehensive review comparable to private law.

29 II. The 26-week statutory timetable for public law cases has
30 never been consistently met since its introduction in 2014.

31 III. Around 32 per cent of public law cases have at least one
32 hearing cancelled before it takes place, contributing to
33 delays and wasted resources.

34 Conference believes that:

35 A. The previous Conservative Government’s mismanagement
36 of the justice system caused delays in family courts to
37 spiral, letting down children and their families.

38 B. Under the current Labour Government, private law
39 proceedings continue to under-recognise domestic abuse
40 and coercive control, with serious consequences.

41 C. Meaningful reform of both private and public law requires
42 full implementation of expert recommendations,
43 improved access to data on system performance and
44 proper resourcing of the family justice system.

45 Conference calls on the Government to:

46 1. Improve private law proceedings by:

47 a) Completing the national rollout of Pathfinder Courts
48 across England and Wales by the end of this
49 Parliament.

50 b) Commissioning an independent review of the
51 implementation of the Harm Panel’s 72
52 recommendations.

Saturday 19 September cont.

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- c) Working with the Judiciary to ensure family judiciary, magistrates, Child and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (Cafcass) officers and experts in private law proceedings have specialist training in domestic abuse.
- d) Establishing a statutory regulator for therapists.
2. Address data gaps across private and public law proceedings by:
- a) Rolling out the FCRRM for private law proceedings.
- b) Commissioning the Ministry of Justice and Department for Education, with His Majesty’s Courts and Tribunals Service, Cafcass, local authorities and the judiciary, to develop a joined-up data strategy to improve family court data collection.
- c) Establishing an anonymisation unit to publish anonymised family court judgements.
3. Commission the Family Justice Board to develop a national improvement plan, underpinned by a system-wide assessment of inefficiencies and regional capacity constraints.

Applicability: England and Wales

Mover: 5 minutes; all other speakers: 3 minutes. For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see page 10.

The deadline for amendments to this motion is 13.00 Monday 7 September; see pages 11-12. Those selected for debate will be printed in Conference Extra and Saturday’s Conference Daily. The deadline for requests for separate votes is 09.00 Thursday 17 September; see page 9.

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17.15 Speech

Chair: Cllr Gareth Epps; Aide: Charley Hasted

F13 Cllr Lisa Spivey, Leader of Gloucestershire County Council

17.15 Policy motion

Chair: Cllr Callum Robertson; Aide: Lucas North; Hall Aide: Alison Jenner

F14 Local Candidate Safety

ALDC

Mover: Lisa Smart MP (Spokesperson for the Cabinet Office)

Summation: Zöe Franklin MP (Spokesperson for Local Government)

- 1 Conference notes:
- 2 A. The murders of Jo Cox MP and Sir David Amess MP, and
- 3 the manslaughter of Cllr Andrew Pennington and
- 4 attempted murder of Nigel Jones MP.
- 5 B. That research shows a growing level of abuse and threats
- 6 of violence towards both candidates in elections and
- 7 elected officials at all levels.
- 8 C. A Local Government Association survey of councillors
- 9 carried out last year as part of its 'Debate not Hate'
- 10 campaign found that:
- 11 i) 52 per cent of councillors replying reported that they
- 12 have had untrue or misleading information about
- 13 their political or personal conduct publicly published,
- 14 with respondents warning of the "dangers to
- 15 democracy".
- 16 ii) 64 per cent said they had experienced abuse online,
- 17 including on social media platforms, while 59 per cent

Saturday 19 September cont.

- 18
- said they had experienced in-person abuse.
- 19
- D. That women, people from ethnic minority backgrounds,
- 20
- disabled people, and LGBTQ+ people are subject to
- 21
- disproportionately high levels of abuse, intimidation and
- 22
- threats.
- 23
- E. That a 2026 *Local Government Chronicle* survey reported
- 24
- that 52 per cent of respondents said concern about online
- 25
- abuse affected decisions to whether to stand or re-stand.
- 26
- F. That *The Guardian* reported on 7 May 2026 that parties
- 27
- had described abuse during the 2026 devolved and local
- 28
- election campaigns as the “worst year in memory”.
- 29
- G. The role of social media in enabling abuse, threats,
- 30
- harassment and misinformation to be directed at
- 31
- candidates and elected officials easily, repeatedly and at
- 32
- scale.
- 33
- H. That in the 2025 LGA Debate Not Hate survey, one fifth of
- 34
- councillors replying said that they have had a threat of
- 35
- violence or death against themselves, this rose to one
- 36
- quarter if you included threats against someone close to
- 37
- them
- 38
- Conference further notes:
- 39
- I. The creation of Operation Bridger and Operation Ford to
- 40
- deal with violence and threats against, respectively, MPs
- 41
- and parliamentary candidates, and councillors and local
- 42
- candidates.
- 43
- II. The effectiveness and responsiveness of police forces to
- 44
- threats and abuse under Operation Ford is highly variable
- 45
- from force to force.
- 46
- III. Abuse and threats are not limited to elected
- 47
- representatives and candidates but can be directed
- 48
- towards, or involve, spouses, partners and children and
- 49
- staff.
- 50
- IV. That Article 10 of the European Convention on Human
- 51
- Rights protects an individual’s rights to hold and express

Saturday 19 September cont.

- 52 opinions.
- 53 Conference believes that:
- 54 a) Abuse, threats and violence have a chilling impact on
- 55 democracy – they stifle debate, discourage individual
- 56 involvement in civic life and discourage people, in
- 57 particular those most likely to face abuse, from standing
- 58 or re-standing for elected office and leadership positions.
- 59 b) Freedom of expression and debate is an essential part of
- 60 a liberal society and there will always be the need to
- 61 balance protecting elected officials and protecting
- 62 everyone’s right to freedom of speech.
- 63 c) There is a difference between robust debate and criticism,
- 64 and even rudeness, on the one hand and threats, violence
- 65 and repetitive abuse on the other.
- 66 d) Directing abuse at, or involving, the families and children
- 67 of elected officials is always wrong;
- 68 e) The publication of elected officials’ and candidates’ home
- 69 addresses is not necessary within a modern democratic
- 70 society when there are multiple routes to communicate
- 71 with elected representatives.
- 72 f) Social media companies have a duty to deal with illegal
- 73 and threatening behaviour on their sites, which is not
- 74 being fully met.
- 75 Conference resolves that:
- 76 1. The law should be amended so that no candidate is
- 77 required, or given a default option, to publish their home
- 78 address as part of the nomination process for any
- 79 election, and so that home address forms are available
- 80 only to those with a clear and legitimate statutory reason
- 81 to view them.
- 82 2. Election agents should be able to use a party office, or
- 83 other approved election correspondence address, as their
- 84 legal office address where publication of their home
- 85 address would create a personal safety or privacy risk.

Saturday 19 September cont.

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3. Returning Officers should have a new duty to validate the home address statements of candidates in elections.
4. The Electoral Commission should produce a code of practice for election officials, drawing together all the necessary information related to the safety and security of candidates in local elections; Returning Officers should have a duty to share such information with candidates.
5. Hostility towards relatives and staff of elected officials and candidates should be a statutory aggravating factor in any offence committed and should lead to a disqualification order under the Elections Act 2022.
6. Police forces should be placed under a clear duty to implement Operation Ford consistently, ensuring that frontline officers understand the scheme, recording relevant incidents as Operation Ford incidents where appropriate, and reporting annually on abuse, threats, harassment and violence against candidates and elected officials.
7. Operation Ford needs a large increase in funding if it is to be effective.
8. Guidance to police forces and prosecutors should make clear that repeated, targeted or escalating behaviour should be assessed cumulatively, rather than each incident being considered only in isolation.
9. The new unit within the National Crime Agency proposed in the Liberal Democrat policy paper 166, *Defending Democracy*, should include advising police forces on how to handle abuse, threats and violence against local elected officials, just as they already provide specialist advice for MPs, including considering the cumulative impact of abusive behaviour on individuals.
10. A UK-wide support service for local elected officials should be set up, jointly by the local government associations operating in the nations of the UK, to provide confidential advice and support, to fast-track the most serious cases to the relevant police force, and, in the most serious cases, to

Saturday 19 September cont.

- 122 provide grants, funded by the Home Office, for home
- 123 security, CCTV and personal panic alarms.
- 124 11. Social media firms operating in the UK should have a
- 125 statutory responsibility to tackle abuse against elected
- 126 officials and be required to provide a support line, staffed
- 127 by humans, for political parties' HQs and UK -wide support
- 128 service to report the most serious cases of online abuse
- 129 and harm to.

Applicability: England except for 5.,6.,7.,9.,10., and 11. which are Federal and 8. which is England and Wales.

Mover: 5 minutes; all other speakers: 3 minutes. For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see page 10.

The deadline for amendments to this motion is 13.00 Monday 7 September; see pages 11-12. Those selected for debate will be printed in Conference Extra and Saturday's Conference Daily. The deadline for requests for separate votes is 09.00 Thursday 17 September; see page 9.

18.00 Close of session

Sunday 20 September

09.00 Policy motion

Chair: Alison Jenner; Aide: Lucas North; Hall Aide: Cllr Gareth Epps

F15 Making Music Matter

14 members

Mover: Anna Sabine MP (Spokesperson for Culture, Media and Sport)
Summation: Jason Thornton

- 1 Conference notes that:
- 2 a) The UK music industry remains one of the nation’s most
- 3 significant economic pillars, contributing £8 billion to the
- 4 UK economy in gross value added, and employing more
- 5 than 220,000 people in 2024.
- 6 b) The Government has undermined trust with the creative
- 7 industries by stating a preferred ‘opt-out’ approach to AI
- 8 content use, before dropping this position following
- 9 sectoral pressure.
- 10 c) Artists are particularly concerned about the impact of AI
- 11 on the industry, with 90 per cent in favour of protections
- 12 to stop their work being used without permission or
- 13 payment.
- 14 d) The voluntary uptake of the Grassroots Ticket Levy
- 15 remains underwhelming, with only 28 per cent of large
- 16 venues implementing the levy, with progress reportedly
- 17 hampered by large ticket distribution organisations.
- 18 e) Europe-wide touring for British musicians has been
- 19 severely disadvantaged by bureaucratic post-Brexit
- 20 barriers, including costly visas, carnets and permits, and
- 21 the Government has failed to achieve tangible progress
- 22 for musicians as part of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation
- 23 Agreement.
- 24 f) While the Government’s curriculum review response has
- 25 committed to ensuring children have access to a well-

Sunday 20 September cont.

- 26 rounded creative education, funding for Music Hubs
- 27 remains 19 per cent below 2011 levels in real terms.
- 28 Conference believes that:
- 29 I. The cultural and creative industries are a primary engine
- 30 of long-term economic growth, local community
- 31 rejuvenation and international soft power for the United
- 32 Kingdom.
- 33 II. Human creativity must be protected, valued and fairly
- 34 remunerated, and that technological innovation can and
- 35 should support the artistic community.
- 36 III. The scraping of British creative content by foreign AI
- 37 companies is fundamentally a question of sovereignty and
- 38 trust.
- 39 IV. Grassroots music venues, which form the lifeblood of the
- 40 UK's world-leading music ecosystem, are closing at an
- 41 alarming rate due to rising development pressures and a
- 42 lack of systemic financial support.
- 43 V. Every child, regardless of background or educational
- 44 needs, has a fundamental right to a rich, high-quality
- 45 creative education, including music.
- 46 Conference reaffirms Liberal Democrat pledges to:
- 47 A. Reverse real-terms cuts to Music Hubs since 2011, with a
- 48 19 per cent increase in funding followed by a commitment
- 49 to annual increases in line with inflation.
- 50 B. Impose a statutory large venue levy to fund grassroots
- 51 venues, alongside a VAT cut for grassroots music venues.
- 52 C. Fully enforce the 'Agent of Change' principle by blocking
- 53 developments nearby existing music venues that lack
- 54 strict soundproofing, and applying it to all noise
- 55 complaints against existing venues.
- 56 Conference calls on the Government to invest in music
- 57 education by:
- 58 i) Reinstating Music PGCE bursaries to attract talented

Sunday 20 September cont.

- 59 musicians into the classroom, with the aim of hiring an
- 60 additional 1,000 music teachers.

- 61 ii) Redirecting the £25 million fund for new instruments into
- 62 a national repairs and maintenance programme, and
- 63 accelerating plans to introduce a musical instrument
- 64 maintenance and repair technician apprenticeship.

- 65 iii) Providing music hubs with multi-year funding settlements
- 66 directly from Department for Education budgets, and
- 67 supporting local councils to offer both individual and
- 68 group music tuition classes for reduced fees, supported
- 69 by an Arts Pupil Premium of at least £90 million per year.

- 70 iv) Ensuring music and creative subjects are embedded into
- 71 core accountability frameworks.

- 72 v) Guaranteeing access to music education for children with
- 73 Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

- 74 Conference further calls on the Government to ensure a fair
- 75 deal for musicians and creatives by:

- 76 a) Confirming that existing UK copyright law applies to
- 77 content used to train AI models, and mandating
- 78 transparency in AI training data, so that creators and
- 79 rights-holders can identify when their work has been
- 80 used, with clear routes of redress.

- 81 b) Establishing a clear and transparent opt-in licensing
- 82 model with fair remuneration for musicians whose work is
- 83 used to train AI systems, and committing to a review on
- 84 directing revenue from licensing deals towards grassroots
- 85 music artists and music education.

- 86 c) Supporting the development of creator collectives for
- 87 independent musicians, enabling collective licensing
- 88 negotiation at scale and ensuring fair market access for
- 89 artists without major-label backing.

- 90 d) Introducing image, voice and personality rights, protecting
- 91 musicians and performers from unauthorised deepfakes
- 92 and synthetic reproductions of their likeness, voice or
- 93 performance.

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- e) Requiring music streaming platforms to clearly label AI-generated content on their platforms.
- Conference further calls on the Government to supercharge growth in the music and live events sector by:
1. Rejoining the European Single Market and Creative Europe, and entering into a customs union with the EU, to provide touring artists with expanded opportunities and frictionless travel for themselves and their instruments.
2. Expanding the UK Music Export Growth Scheme and putting it on a permanent statutory footing, supporting emerging artists to build international careers.
3. Establishing a network of cultural envoys, modelled on the existing UK Trade Envoys system, to champion British creative talent across the globe and secure reciprocal access for touring artists.
4. Championing equitable remuneration for streaming, ensuring that performers receive a fair share of streaming revenues alongside record labels.
5. Extending orchestral tax relief to choirs.

Applicability: Federal except for A.-C. and i)–v), which are England only.

Mover: 5 minutes; all other speakers: 3 minutes. For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see page 10.

The deadline for amendments to this motion is 13.00 Monday 7 September; see pages 11-12. Those selected for debate will be printed in Conference Extra and Sunday's Conference Daily. The deadline for requests for separate votes is 09.00 Saturday 19 September; see page 9.

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09.30 Policy motion

Chair: Cara Jenkinson; Aide: Cllr Callum Robertson; Hall Aide: Chloe Hutchinson

F16 Getting the Nation Walking, Wheeling and Cycling

14 members

Mover: Olly Glover MP (Spokesperson for Transport)

Summation: To be announced

- 1 Conference notes:
- 2 i) That enabling more people to walk, wheel and cycle short
- 3 journeys eases congestion, improves local air quality and
- 4 helps tackle the public health crisis driven by physical
- 5 inactivity.
- 6 ii) Research by Active Travel England indicating that 5.3
- 7 million more people being regularly physically active could
- 8 reduce annual sick days by 4.4 million, free up 1.7 million
- 9 GP appointments, help millions of households save
- 10 around £1,700 yearly, prevent 2,500 premature deaths
- 11 and boost the economy by £115 billion.
- 12 iii) That active travel improves public health by integrating
- 13 exercise into everyday routines, preventing serious
- 14 conditions like heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and obesity.
- 15 iv) That active travel lowers stress, boosts mental well-being,
- 16 reduces road congestion, and cuts emissions to clean up
- 17 local air quality.
- 18 v) That the 2025 Walking and Cycling Index, produced by the
- 19 Walk Wheel Cycle Trust, estimates that everyday active
- 20 travel prevents almost 156,000 serious long-term health
- 21 conditions across the UK each year – from hip fractures to
- 22 dementia and depression – saving the NHS around £1.94
- 23 billion annually.
- 24 vi) That transport remains one of the largest sources of UK
- 25 greenhouse gas emissions, and giving people easy, low-
- 26 carbon options for local journeys is essential to meeting
- 27 the UK’s climate commitments.

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28 vii) That the potential for walking, wheeling, and cycling to
29 assist in reducing congestion is illustrated by the fact that
30 59 per cent of car and van journeys are made for
31 distances of five miles or under, according to the 2024/25
32 National Travel Survey.

33 viii) That the Department for Transport estimates that for
34 every £1 invested in active travel, the government
35 achieves around £4.30 in benefits.

36 ix) That despite these structural savings, active travel funding
37 remains volatile, piecemeal and repeatedly exposed to
38 central government budget cuts.

39 x) Calls from 18 public health, environmental, and walking/
40 wheeling/cycling organisations for 10 per cent of the
41 transport budget to be dedicated to walking, cycling, and
42 wheeling investment.

43 Conference believes that:

44 a) Walking, wheeling and cycling should be safe and
45 attractive choices for short everyday journeys.

46 b) Investment in active travel is not merely transport policy
47 but a preventive intervention for public health, local
48 economies and the environment.

49 c) Too many new housing developments still leave residents
50 with little practical alternative to the car for everyday
51 journeys, and better design from the outset can change
52 that.

53 Conference calls for:

54 1. The ring-fencing of 5 per cent of the Department for
55 Transport’s annual budget for active travel infrastructure
56 for walking, wheeling and cycling, with a trajectory to
57 achieve the increase from current spending percentages
58 to 10 per cent to be developed when finances allow.

59 2. A national ‘Rails to Trails’ programme to convert disused
60 railway corridors, towpaths and redundant infrastructure
61 into high-quality, interconnected routes for walking,
62 wheeling and cycling.

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3. A reform of the National Planning Policy Framework to require continuous, high-quality walking and cycling infrastructure in all new housing developments from the outset.
4. A requirement that new developments connect to existing active travel networks and public transport hubs, as well as town and city centres where appropriate, so that residents always have genuine, convenient options for short trips.
5. Encouragement and funding to be made available for Mayoral Development Corporations to deliver active travel networks within, and pedestrianisation of, key cultural and commercial areas in cities, such as Soho or around Covent Garden, if desired.
6. Encouragement and funding for the wider rollout of 'School Streets' and 'Cycle Streets', designing streets that feel safe for active travel to schools, and for people walking and wheeling while keeping traffic flowing smoothly at low speeds.

Applicability: England.

Mover: 7 minutes; summation of motion and movers and summation of any amendments: 4 minutes; all other speakers: 3 minutes. For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see page 10.

The deadline for amendments to this motion is 13.00 Monday 7 September; see pages 11-12. Those selected for debate will be printed in Conference Extra and Sunday's Conference Daily. The deadline for requests for separate votes is 09.00 Saturday 19 September; see page 9.

10.15 Policy motion

Chair: Cllr Nick da Costa (Chair, FCC); Aide; Baroness Kitching; Hall Aide; Jess Brown-Fuller MP

F17 Defending Democracy (Democracy Policy Paper)

Sunday 20 September cont.

Federal Policy Committee

Mover: Lisa Smart MP (Spokesperson for the Cabinet Office)
Summation: Sarah Lewis (Chair of the Policy Working Group)

- 1 Conference believes that democracy in Britain is under threat
- 2 from:
- 3 i) Foreign states and billionaires who seek to use money and
- 4 media interference to unduly influence British politicians
- 5 and British elections.
- 6 ii) The rapid rise of new technologies which makes it easier
- 7 for misinformation from malign actors to spread fear and
- 8 confusion, stirring up racial hatred and moral panic, and
- 9 which amplifies grievance narratives that leave people
- 10 vulnerable to radicalisation.
- 11 iii) An historic low in public trust in British politics,
- 12 compounded by a First-Past-the-Post voting system for
- 13 general elections and the further centralisation of power
- 14 in Westminster.
- 15 Conference notes that these threats are evident in the results
- 16 of the latest British Social Attitudes Survey (February 2026)
- 17 and in the independent findings of the recent Rycroft Review.
- 18 Conference reaffirms the Liberal Democrat commitment to:
- 19 A. Introduce proportional representation by the Single
- 20 Transferable Vote for electing Westminster MPs and local
- 21 councillors in England.
- 22 B. Expand the franchise to 16- and 17-year olds.
- 23 C. Introduce measures such as automatic voter registration
- 24 and removal of the need for ID that make it easier for
- 25 people to vote.
- 26 D. Reform the House of Lords with a proper democratic
- 27 mandate.
- 28 E. Introduce a codified constitution.
- 29 F. Strengthen local government.

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30 G. A Federal Britain.

31 Conference resolves to address the threats to democracy by
32 tackling undue influence head on, and by building the
33 resilience of individual citizens and communities, giving
34 people the power to make informed choices about their own
35 lives and to see their choices fairly reflected in the actions of
36 government at all levels.

37 Conference therefore endorses policy paper 165, *Defending*
38 *Democracy*, and in particular welcomes its proposals to:

39 1. Tackle undue influence by foreign states by:

40 a) Assigning clear responsibility at ministerial and Senior
41 Civil Service levels for combatting foreign political
42 interference, with resources commensurate to the
43 challenge this poses to UK democracy.

44 b) Prohibiting anyone who has served as a political
45 appointee in the central government of a foreign state
46 from donating to UK political parties for a period of
47 ten years.

48 c) Conducting a stand-alone review into the extent of US
49 interference in British politics, including the extent to
50 which known British extremists are being actively
51 supported by the White House.

52 d) Requiring candidates for national elected office to
53 declare any past or current income or gifts from any
54 government on the Foreign Influence Registration
55 Scheme enhanced tier list or from any person or
56 organisation connected to that government.

57 2. Tackle the undue influence of big money in politics by:

58 a) Introducing a total year-round cap on political
59 spending by political parties.

60 b) Introducing a donation cap on individual donations,
61 and an annual donation cap on individuals, including
62 for gifts to politicians, with a Royal Commission to
63 develop specific figures; the Commission should also

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- 64 consider its approach to corporate donations.
- 65 c) Introducing national spending limits for the regulated
- 66 period of local elections, to close a potential loophole.
- 67 d) Working towards radical real-time transparency for
- 68 political advertising, donations and spending,
- 69 including an easily searchable public database of all
- 70 online political adverts.
- 71 3. Strengthening the enforcement of electoral law, including
- 72 by:
 - 73 a) Protecting and strengthening the independence of the
 - 74 Electoral Commission, following Conservative attempts
 - 75 to undermine it.
 - 76 b) Setting up a dedicated national policing unit within the
 - 77 National Crime Agency, specifically dedicated to
 - 78 tackling corruption and criminal behaviour within
 - 79 Westminster and Whitehall, including criminal
 - 80 breaches of electoral law.
 - 81 c) Ensuring that the sentencing associated with each
 - 82 criminal offence in electoral law matches the
 - 83 seriousness of the offence.
- 84 4. Urgently convene a Constitutional Convention to enshrine
- 85 fundamental shared British values, rights and freedoms in
- 86 a new codified constitution; this will act as the first line of
- 87 defence against the multiple threats Britain faces to its
- 88 democracy.
- 89 5. Promoting a vigorous local democratic culture as the
- 90 bedrock for a healthy democracy by:
 - 91 a) Ending the top-down reorganisation of councils and
 - 92 the imposition of elected mayors on communities
 - 93 which do not want them.
 - 94 b) Devolving more fiscal and economic power to local
 - 95 authorities.
 - 96 c) Supporting the presence of community, town and
 - 97 parish councils.

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- 98 6. Strengthening resilience to the spread of misinformation
99 and hatred in all forms of media by:
- 100 a) Commissioning a second Leveson-type review of
101 media regulation, covering new media in addition to
102 traditional broadcast and print media, recognising that
103 the media scene has evolved significantly since the
104 original Leveson Inquiry reported in 2012.
- 105 b) Introducing lifelong learning for all citizens about the
106 digital public sphere and how to navigate it.
- 107 c) Funding local journalism and independent fact-
108 checkers with a share of a levy on very large social
109 media platforms; and making it easier for these
110 organisations to gain charitable status.
- 111 7. Promoting informed citizenship and countering
112 radicalisation by:
- 113 a) Strengthening citizenship education in primary and
114 secondary schools, with a greater focus on political
115 and media literacy; and elevating the academic status
116 of the Citizenship GCSE.
- 117 b) Increasing the public funding available to civil society
118 organisations which can play a role in citizenship
119 education, including political media literacy; this
120 should include the creation of a long-term, ringfenced
121 Community Democratic Resilience Fund to support
122 youth services, training for educators and parents and
123 local democratic participation initiatives.
- 124 c) Conducting a full overhaul of Prevent, including the
125 delivery of a new counter-radicalisation programme –
126 a community-led engagement strategy focused on
127 minimising exposure to pathways towards violent
128 extremism and to meet the challenges of today’s
129 threats.
- 130 d) Ensuring that counter-radicalisation approaches also
131 uphold protections for academic freedom, journalistic
132 activity and legitimate political dissent, including
133 upholding the right to protest.

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- 134 e) Imposing a duty on social media and other tech
135 companies to have 'Community Safety Teams',
136 underpinned by minimum quality standards, to tackle
137 extremism, hate, misinformation and other harmful
138 content.

Applicability: Federal except for 5. a) and 7. a) which are England only.

Mover and summation combined: 16 minutes; mover and summation of amendments: 4 minutes; all other speakers: 3 minutes. For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see page 10.

In addition to speeches from the platform, voting members will be able to make concise (maximum one-minute) interventions from the floor during the debate on the motion. See pages 10-11 for further information.

The deadline for amendments to this motion is 13.00 Monday 7 September; see pages 11-12. Those selected for debate will be printed in Conference Extra and Sunday's Conference Daily. The deadline for requests for separate votes is 09.00 Saturday 19 September; see page 9.

11.50 Speech

Chair: Jennie Rigg; Aide: Lord Mohammed

F18 Daisy Cooper MP (Spokesperson for the Treasury)

12.05 Lunch break and fringe

Please see the Conference Directory for our fringe and exhibition programme.

Sunday 20 September cont.

14.55 Question and answer session

Chair: Eleanor Kelly (Vice Chair, FCC); Aide: Jennie Rigg; Hall Aide: Paul McGarry

F19 Sir Ed Davey MP, Leader of the Liberal Democrats

The session will be moderated by journalist Carolyn Quinn. Members may put questions on any topic to the Leader of the Liberal Democrats. Concise questions (maximum 25 words) may be submitted online until 13.00 on Monday 7 September, or to the Speaker's Table by 12.05 on Sunday 20 September. See Page 10.

15.45 Party business

Chair: Lord Pack; Aide: Dr Chris Adams (Vice Chair, FCC); Hall Aide: Lucas North

F20 Federal Board Report: questions and accountability

Mover: Josh Babarinde MP (President of the Liberal Democrats)

The report sessions are the chance for party members to hear how the party is being run and to put questions directly to the Party President and other movers of reports.

In addition to the vote on the Board Report as a whole, there will be votes to ratify changes to election regulations and the complaints procedure – please see the Federal Board Report for details.

See notes to F23 below.

F21 Federal International Relations Committee: questions and accountability

Mover: David Chalmers (Chair, Federal International Relations Committee)

See notes to F23 below.

Sunday 20 September cont.

F22 Federal Council: questions and accountability

Mover: Cllr Tim Pickstone (Chair, Federal Council)

See notes to F23 below.

F23 Vice President's Report: questions and accountability

Mover: Victoria Collins MP (Vice President of the Liberal Democrats)

Notes to F20 – F23: The deadline for questions to these reports is 13.00 on Monday 7 September. Questions selected will be published in Conference Extra and Saturday's Conference Daily. These questions will be guaranteed an answer, either in the session or in writing thereafter.

Questions may also be submitted up until 14.45 on Sunday 20 September; such questions are only taken at the discretion of the chair.

See page 6 for further information.

16.30 Party business

Chair: Duncan Brack; Aide: Cllr Sandra Gidley; Hall Aide: Jennie Rigg

F24 Party Strategy – Turning Electoral Breakthrough into Lasting Liberal Strength

Federal Board

Mover: Josh Babarinde MP (President of the Liberal Democrats)

Summation: Cllr Carl Cashman

- 1 Conference welcomes the fact that Liberal Democrats have
- 2 achieved historic electoral successes since the last party
- 3 strategy in 2021: we secured the party's best ever general
- 4 election result, becoming the largest Liberal force in the
- 5 House of Commons in a hundred years; secured our longest
- 6 ever winning streak, with net gains in eight consecutive
- 7 rounds of local elections; more than doubled our
- 8 representation at Holyrood, and consolidated our presence in
- 9 the Senedd.

Sunday 20 September cont.

10 But Conference understands that historic results do not
11 guarantee a historic future; our task now is to turn electoral
12 breakthrough into lasting Liberal strength.

13 Conference acknowledges that:

14 I. This success is a testament to the dedication of our
15 members, volunteers, candidates, elected representatives,
16 peers, donors and staff.

17 II. Their commitment to community politics, listening to and
18 empowering people and working tirelessly for the
19 communities they serve, remains one of our greatest
20 strengths.

21 III. The next stage requires us to match that local strength
22 with a clearer national Liberal identity and a modern
23 communications operation.

24 Conference also understands that there are many parts of the
25 country where campaigners have worked with equal
26 dedication but have not yet seen the results their efforts
27 deserve – we recognise their commitment, and we are clear
28 that building strength beyond our existing areas is essential to
29 being a party for the whole of Britain.

30 Conference believes that our party is ambitious to go further
31 still, and the party strategy, built with members, is one of the
32 key instruments through which we will fuel those ambitions.

33 Conference notes that:

34 A. The Federal Board launched a party strategy consultation
35 in 2025 with an initial consultative session, followed in
36 2026 by consultative workshops and a survey, together
37 generating over 1,500 individual contributions to the party
38 strategy process.

39 B. Across that evidence, members gave a clear message: the
40 party must be even more confident in its Liberal identity,
41 even clearer in its national message, even stronger in its
42 organisation and even more disciplined in turning strategy
43 into action.

Sunday 20 September cont.

- 44 Conference further notes the following findings from the
45 party strategy consultation:
- 46 i) Members overwhelmingly anchor the party's purpose in
47 championing Liberal values and individual freedom,
48 fairness, equality and social justice, and representing,
49 serving and listening to communities across the UK.
 - 50 ii) Members define success primarily in terms of electoral
51 growth and more seats, delivering real policy and societal
52 outcomes, and achieving genuine power and influence in
53 government at all levels, with that growth built from a
54 stable base, particularly in local government.
 - 55 iii) Members identify the party's greatest opportunities for a
56 competitive advantage as developing a clear national
57 narrative and distinctive messaging; demonstrating
58 honesty, integrity and competence; and being a credible,
59 Liberal alternative to populism and nationalism.
 - 60 iv) Members believe that the party's greatest need is to
61 communicate a clear identity through distinctive
62 messaging, especially given the fast rise of Reform and the
63 Green Party, and the resilience of Labour, the
64 Conservatives, the SNP and Plaid Cymru.
 - 65 v) Members believe that the party's electoral appeal should
66 be firmly grounded in Liberalism; the problem is not our
67 values, but our failure to communicate them clearly,
68 practically and emotionally; well-communicated Liberalism
69 is the strongest electoral offer available to us and to the
70 country.
 - 71 vi) Members believe that how we engage with other parties
72 must start from our Liberal distinctiveness, be judged
73 issue by issue, and proceed only from a position of
74 strength, with clearly defined limits and full transparency
75 with members, volunteers, elected representatives and
76 peers; preserving our identity is non-negotiable –
77 members overwhelmingly reject pre-election pacts, and
78 believe that post-election local arrangements should
79 remain a matter for local stakeholders, reflecting a core
80 tenet of Liberalism.

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81 vii) Members identify investment in communications, media
82 and messaging, especially social and digital media
83 capability, alongside investment in volunteers and
84 grassroots capacity, as urgent strategic priorities rather
85 than optional organisational improvements.

86 Conference reaffirms that the Liberal Democrats' purpose is
87 to build a Liberal society in which every individual has the
88 freedom to live the life they choose, supported by strong
89 public services, a fair economy and a democracy that
90 genuinely works for everyone, ensuring that no one is
91 enslaved by poverty, ignorance or conformity.

92 Conference therefore agrees the following party strategy for
93 the Liberal Democrats, rooted in confident Liberalism,
94 disciplined campaigning, modern communications, reaching
95 out to all communities in our country and a determination to
96 win power to change lives:

97 1. Our aims are to:

98 a) Secure the election of as many Liberal Democrats as
99 possible at local, devolved and Westminster levels, so
100 that we can exercise power, deliver Liberal policy
101 outcomes and build a fairer, freer and more
102 democratic Britain.

103 b) Support party organisations in Scotland, Wales and
104 England in maximising their success in Westminster,
105 devolved and local elections to deliver on their
106 respective manifestos.

107 c) Become the largest party in local government in
108 England, and one of the two largest parties in local
109 government across the United Kingdom, by investing
110 in year-round local campaigning, candidate
111 development, council group support, regional capacity
112 and the structures needed to fight new unitary and
113 large-area elections effectively.

114 d) Remove from power any local, devolved or
115 Westminster government that threatens liberal
116 democracy, and work towards a Britain in which the

Sunday 20 September cont.

- 117 Liberal Democrats are a party of government; this
 118 includes stopping Reform UK and the far right from
 119 being in power at any level, while building a positive
 120 Liberal alternative to the politics of nationalism,
 121 authoritarianism, grievance and division.
- 122 e) Expand our electoral coalition beyond our current
 123 base at any given layer of government, with a
 124 particular focus on wards, divisions, constituencies
 125 and electoral regions in the North, Midlands, Wales
 126 and urban Britain.
- 127 f) Deliver a strategy rooted in our core Liberal values,
 128 including individual freedom, fairness, opportunity,
 129 equality, internationalism, democratic reform and care
 130 for the environment.
- 131 g) Build a modern party that reflects the diversity of the
 132 society that we are ambitious to represent, with
 133 particular focus on reaching communities currently
 134 under-represented among our members, volunteers,
 135 elected representatives and peers.
- 136 h) Grow our membership, activist and candidate base,
 137 especially among younger people and under-
 138 represented communities, so that the party has the
 139 people, skills and energy needed to campaign, win and
 140 govern in every part of Britain.
- 141 2. We will achieve these aims most effectively by:
- 142 a) Developing a compelling, clear and distinctive national
 143 narrative, grounded in Liberal values, that has
 144 emotional as well as rational appeal, and that clearly
 145 and visibly differentiates the Liberal Democrats from
 146 other parties, particularly those with populist and
 147 nationalist tendencies.
- 148 b) Resisting the politics of nationalism, authoritarianism,
 149 division and grievance, wherever they arise, and
 150 offering instead Liberal politics rooted in freedom,
 151 fairness, internationalism, hope and respect for every
 152 individual.

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- 153 c) Maintaining a strong tradition of community politics
154 and a ground game of relentless door-knocking and
155 literature distribution, while recognising that building
156 stronger national messaging alongside a professional
157 social media and digital operation is no longer
158 optional but essential to reaching new communities of
159 voters.
- 160 d) Consolidating places where we are stronger, so that
161 we can enhance our electoral sustainability, and so
162 that volunteers from those 'fortresses' are more
163 sustainably able to offer support to developing seats.
- 164 e) Working with Liberals across Europe and the world to
165 defend pluralism, the rule of law, and the open,
166 internationalist values on which Europe's future
167 prosperity and security depend.
- 168 3. Our top priorities to help us fight and win elections – and
169 win office – will be:
- 170 a) Building a clear, simple and emotionally resonant
171 national identity for the party, ensuring that voters
172 and internal Liberal Democrat stakeholders feel
173 confident answering the question of what the Liberal
174 Democrats stand for, and that our message is
175 consistent, repeatable and distinctive.
- 176 b) Investing significantly in digital and social media
177 capability, treating it as a strategic priority equivalent
178 to our ground game, through:
- 179 i) Building a significantly larger and more effective
180 social media team at Liberal Democrat HQ.
- 181 ii) Developing high-quality video content and a
182 presence on platforms that better enable us to
183 reach younger voters, transient populations and
184 those who can be difficult to access through our
185 traditional ground game.
- 186 iii) Training and supporting local volunteers and
187 candidates to use digital tools effectively, extending
188 our ground game strengths into new channels.

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- c) Renewing and strengthening our grassroots capacity, recognising members, volunteers, volunteers, candidates and local parties as essential electoral infrastructure, by:
 - i) Recruiting and retaining members, volunteers, candidates, donors and staff, especially from under-represented communities, and giving them a rewarding experience of the party beyond election periods.
 - ii) Selecting candidates for elections at the earliest possible opportunity and ensuring that they have access to the training, mentoring and campaign support they need to succeed.
 - iii) Supporting developing local parties with the resources, expertise, staff support and shared tools they need to grow.
 - iv) Investing in training that teaches first principles as well as practical tools, so that campaigners can adapt to a volatile, multi-party environment.
 - v) Prioritising a recruitment drive for younger members, volunteers and candidates, especially those from under-represented backgrounds, with clear paths into training, responsibility, decision-making and public office.
 - vi) Removing unnecessary administrative barriers to action across the party, enabling members, volunteers, candidates, elected representatives, peers, donors and staff to deliver their part in fulfilling the party's objectives.
 - vii) Spotting and supporting local talent early, with active succession planning and team-building so that local parties do not become over-dependent on one or two key individuals.
 - d) Taking our efforts to promote diversity to a higher level, with an ambition to reflect all parts of the society we seek to represent, at every level of the party and

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public office; this will involve Implementing the recommendations of the 2024 General Election Review on gender equality, racial equality, disability equality, LGBTQ+ equality, and the representation of young people.
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e) Completing implementation of the diversity recommendations from the Thornhill and Alderdice Reviews, particularly those relating to racial equality and diversity.
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f) Investing in socio-economic diversity, so that working-class Liberal Democrat talent can thrive at every level of the party.
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g) Striving for gender parity among Liberal Democrats at every level of government.
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h) Reaching out to under-represented communities, recognising that community politics must mean listening to, empowering and engaging with all communities, not only those we have been most successful at reaching to date.
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i) Continuing to build a sustainable and diversified financial base for the party, with a fundraising narrative that appeals to existing and new party donors with a compelling, clear and distinctive national message.
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j) Investing further in information technology, data, and campaign systems that are reliable, user-friendly and designed around the needs of campaigners, enabling better targeting, easier collaboration, stronger digital campaigning and more effective use of member and voter data.
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Conference resolves that to support the delivery of these priorities, we will also:
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A. Provide members and volunteers with an excellent experience of the party, recognising that a growing, motivated and diverse membership is essential to our electoral success, including by:

Sunday 20 September cont.

- 262 i) Recognising that the experience of members,
263 volunteers and volunteers differs greatly depending
264 on where they live, the strength and capacity of their
265 local party, and the support available from regional,
266 state and federal party bodies, and ensuring that
267 parties receive the differing levels of support they
268 need to improve that experience.
- 269 ii) Providing opportunities for members to develop and
270 promote Liberal political priorities locally and
271 nationally.
- 272 iii) Supporting members to stand for election to public
273 bodies.
- 274 iv) Providing high-quality training, mentoring and
275 development opportunities to help members,
276 volunteers and candidates build the skills needed to
277 support the party's objectives.
- 278 v) Supporting members to work with others who share
279 their interests, including through party bodies,
280 Affiliated Organisations and other groupings.
- 281 vi) Reducing barriers to participation within the party,
282 including participating in roles within the party, policy-
283 making and Federal Conference.
- 284 vii) Modernising the member experience, so that all are
285 welcomed, valued, retained and offered meaningful
286 opportunities to contribute beyond election periods.
- 287 viii) Ensuring the complaints system is fair, proportionate,
288 timely and confidential where appropriate, while
289 maintaining the integrity and independence of
290 individual processes.
- 291 B. Ensure that this strategy is implemented effectively by:
- 292 i) Engaging members, volunteers, elected
293 representatives, peers, donors and staff as partners in
294 delivering this strategy, communicating trade-offs
295 honestly and ensuring that ownership is shared at
296 every level of the party.

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- 297 ii) Embedding the strategy across the party, through
298 state, regional and local structures, and with
299 parliamentarians, candidates and councillors, and
300 using internal communications.
- 301 iii) Reporting back to Federal Conference on progress
302 against this strategy, including delivery against agreed
303 measurable milestones, key areas of progress, areas
304 where further action is required and any proposed
305 changes to the strategy.
- 306 iv) Further developing our 'one party' approach and
307 culture, so that every part of the Liberal Democrat
308 family, including members, volunteers, candidates,
309 councillors, parliamentarians, directly elected mayors,
310 staff, state parties, regional parties, local parties,
311 Affiliated Organisations and donors, works together to
312 achieve our shared objectives.
- 313 v) Continuing to make progress on measuring, reducing
314 and offsetting carbon emissions that arise from party
315 operations, towards the aim of eventually operating at
316 net zero emissions, and embedding sustainability in
317 the way we run our party.

Applicability: Federal

Mover: 7 minutes; summation of motion and movers and summation of any amendments: 4 minutes; all other speakers: 3 minutes. For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see page 10.

In addition to speeches from the platform, voting members will be able to make concise (maximum one-minute) interventions from the floor during the debate on the motion. See pages 10-11 for further information.

The deadline for amendments to this motion is 13.00 Monday 7 September; see pages 11-12. Those selected for debate will be printed in Conference Extra and Sunday's Conference Daily. The deadline for requests for separate votes is 09.00 Saturday 19 September; see page 9.

18.00 Close of session

Monday 21 September

09.00 Policy Motion

Chair: Cllr Gareth Epps; Aide: Lord Pack; Hall Aide: To be confirmed

F25 **A Fair Shot: Reforming Recruitment**

Young Liberals

Mover: Abrial Jerram

Summation: Sarah Anderson

- 1 Conference notes with concern that:
- 2 A. Over 1 million young people aged 16–24 are not in
- 3 education, employment or training.
- 4 B. The Milburn Review found that “entry-level roles have
- 5 become less plentiful and more demanding. Recruitment
- 6 has become more remote, more automated and less
- 7 human”.
- 8 C. Research conducted by University College London showed
- 9 that disadvantaged and ethnic minority graduates have
- 10 lower job offer rates, with huge disparities at both the
- 11 initial application stage and online test stage.
- 12 D. The Information Commissioner's Office has found that
- 13 employers were using “solely automated systems without
- 14 meaningful human involvement” when making hiring
- 15 decisions and concluded that there is a need for greater
- 16 transparency and improved safeguards.
- 17 Conference believes that:
- 18 i) Fair hiring practices are essential for ensuring equality of
- 19 opportunity.
- 20 ii) Job applicants deserve honesty and openness regarding
- 21 both the roles that they apply for and the hiring process
- 22 used, including any automation used.
- 23 iii) The use of automation does not remove human
- 24 accountability for decisions taken.

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- iv) Employers should be free to choose whom to hire within fair, lawful and transparent recruitment processes.
 - Conference therefore calls on the Government to:
 - 1. Develop a Fair Recruitment Code for externally advertised job vacancies, in consultation with ACAS, regulators, industry bodies, employers, recruiters, trade unions, job boards and youth and disability organisations.
 - 2. Ensure the code sets standards for transparency regarding:
 - a) Job adverts, including stating minimum pay and vacancy status.
 - b) The use of recruitment tests and automation, including stating what is assessed, and their role in decision-making.
 - c) Notification of outcome, including a requirement to notify all applicants of the status of their application by a specified date.
 - d) The use and remuneration of applicant work when used commercially or operationally.
 - e) Stage-level equality monitoring, limited to large-volume recruiters.
 - 3. Promote the widespread adoption of the code, requiring its adoption by government departments, agencies and other government-funded employers, producing code-compliant templates and working with job boards, recruiter platforms and industry bodies to embed the code's standards through sector agreements.
 - 4. Create a single online service which directs complaints regarding code breaches to the appropriate advice body or regulator.
 - 5. Review the code annually and introduce targeted legal requirements and necessary enforcement measures where any standard is widely unmet.

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Applicability: Federal

Mover: 5 minutes; all other speakers: 3 minutes. For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see page 10.

The deadline for amendments to this motion is 13.00 Monday 7 September; see pages 11-12. Those selected for debate will be printed in Conference Extra and Monday's Conference Daily. The deadline for requests for separate votes is 09.00 Sunday 20 September; see page 9.

09.30 Policy Motion

Chair: Charley Hasted; Aide: Baroness Pinnock; Hall Aide: Lucas North

F26 Introducing Anti-SLAPP legislation

12 members

Mover: Jess Brown-Fuller MP (Spokesperson for Justice)
Summation: To be announced

- 1
- Conference notes that:
- 2
- I. A SLAPP – or Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation
- 3
- is an abusive legal threat aimed at stifling public
- 4
- participation and protected speech.
- 5
- II. In the Foreign Policy Centre's 2020 survey the UK was by
- 6
- far the most frequent country of origin for legal threats
- 7
- received by journalists investigating financial crime and
- 8
- corruption.
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- III. The Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act
- 10
- 2023 introduced anti-SLAPP protections for reporting on
- 11
- economic crime.
- 12
- IV. In April 2024, the Council of Europe Committee of
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- Ministers approved Recommendation CM/Rec(2024)2,
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- which establishes a set of minimum standards for Council
- 15
- of Europe member states, of which the UK is one, to tackle
- 16
- SLAPPs.
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- V. In May 2024, the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA)

Monday 21 September cont.

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- renewed its warning against the use of SLAPPs and provided detailed guidance on when it would take regulatory action against solicitors and law firms.
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- VI. Currently there are no universal statutory protections to counter SLAPPs in UK law, meaning journalists, whistleblowers, campaigners and victims speaking out on matters of public interest unrelated to economic crime have no legal recourse.
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- VII. Cases that reach court are just the ‘tip of the iceberg’, with pre-court intimidation and the threat of costly legal proceedings producing a chilling effect on journalists, campaigners and others acting in the public interest.
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- VIII. The Labour Government has repeatedly committed to introducing anti-SLAPP legislation, but has so far failed to do so.
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- Conference believes that:
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- A. Equal access to justice for all is a fundamental right in any democratic society.
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- B. Nobody should be able to use vast sums of money to silence legitimate scrutiny or public interest reporting.
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- C. The current anti-SLAPP regime is too narrow and does not provide proper protection across all areas of public interest.
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- D. The Labour Government is failing to act with any urgency, despite the threat SLAPPs pose to a healthy democracy.
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- E. Strong protections against SLAPPs are essential to upholding Britain’s long and proud history of media freedom, democratic accountability and the rule of law.
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- F. Effective anti-SLAPP legislation must distinguish between abusive litigation and legitimate claims in defamation, privacy and other areas of law.
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- Conference calls on the Government to:
- 49
1. Introduce comprehensive anti-SLAPP legislation covering

Monday 21 September cont.

- 50 all matters of public interest which would:
- 51 a) Introduce a filter mechanism that empowers courts to
- 52 swiftly dispose of SLAPPs.
- 53 b) Extend early dismissal procedures and costs
- 54 protection for defendants to all SLAPP cases, not just
- 55 those involving economic crime.
- 56 c) Empower courts to impose financial penalties on
- 57 those who bring abusive SLAPP claims to deter future
- 58 use and provide full compensation to those targeted.
- 59 2. Strengthen the regulatory powers of professional
- 60 standards bodies and ensure robust enforcement against
- 61 lawyers and law firms that engage in abusive SLAPP
- 62 litigation.
- 63 3. Improve access to legal advice and support for journalists,
- 64 whistleblowers, campaigners and others facing SLAPP
- 65 threats.

Applicability: England and Wales.

Mover: 5 minutes; all other speakers: 3 minutes. For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see page 10.

The deadline for amendments to this motion is 13.00 Monday 7 September; see pages 11-12. Those selected for debate will be printed in Conference Extra and Monday's Conference Daily. The deadline for requests for separate votes is 09.00 Sunday 20 September; see page 9.

10.05 Policy Motion

Chair: Eleanor Kelly (Vice Chair, FCC); Aide; Baroness Kitching; Hall Aide; Jess Brown-Fuller MP

F27 Patient-Centred, Accessible and Preventive: A Liberal Vision for Primary Health Care (Primary Healthcare Policy Paper)

Federal Policy Committee

Mover: Helen Maguire MP (Spokesperson for Primary Care and Cancer)

Summation: Dr Kate O'Kelly (Chair of the Policy Working Group)

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1 Conference recognises that NHS primary healthcare services
2 play a frontline role in treating patients and that their visible
3 shortcomings are both a representation of the failings that
4 exist throughout the entire system and a problem in and of
5 themselves.

6 Conference notes that:

- 7 I. Primary care is where most patients first seek help and
8 where early treatment prevents illness from escalating
9 into a problem that adds to demands on hospitals.
- 10 II. General practices, dentists and pharmacies are the front
11 door to the rest of the NHS and they collectively deliver 90
12 per cent of the interactions between the NHS and the
13 public.
- 14 III. Health has been the second most important issue to
15 voters over the past 15 years, behind only the economy.

16 Conference notes with anger that the Labour Government
17 has utterly failed NHS primary healthcare services, and that
18 since entering office ministers have chosen to make hospital
19 waiting lists the political test of NHS recovery, while treating
20 the front door of the health service without the same urgency,
21 grip or guarantee of improvement.

22 Conference further notes that the Labour Government's claim
23 to be fixing 'the front door' of the NHS is both inaccurate and
24 insulting, with nearly half the public delaying or avoiding
25 contacting their GP about a health concern, 4.1 million GP
26 appointments in October 2025 taking place more than 28
27 days after booking, and 41 per cent of patients not being
28 offered a choice of appointment time, day or location, despite
29 patient choice being strongly linked to satisfaction with care.

30 Conference deplores the fact that successive Conservative
31 governments presided over a decade in which primary care
32 became harder to access, more unequal, and less sustainable;
33 under their mismanagement, general practice was left with
34 fewer fully qualified general practitioners per patient,
35 dentistry became out of reach for millions, community
36 pharmacies closed in record numbers and the share of NHS

Monday 21 September cont.

37 spending going to primary care shrank even as demand rose.

38 Conference believes that a Liberal NHS primary care system
39 should:

40 a) Transform formal rights into real freedoms by giving
41 people the capability to be healthy, which is largely
42 determined by the quality of the NHS primary care
43 system.

44 b) Treat people as individuals with individual needs rather
45 than as a number in a backlog that needs to be cleared.

46 c) Respect the fact that quality means different things to
47 different people, and that everyone would prioritise
48 speed, continuity, face-to-face care, digital access,
49 prevention, reassurance or a trusted long-term
50 relationship differently.

51 d) Never wait for people to reach crisis point before
52 becoming available, because a health service that waits
53 until people are acutely ill fails to empower people to live
54 a life of their choosing.

55 Conference notes with concern that:

56 i) Only 26 per cent of Britons are satisfied with how the NHS
57 runs.

58 ii) 53 per cent of Britons expect care to get worse in the next
59 five years.

60 iii) Over a quarter of Britons think the NHS is inherently
61 broken and cannot be improved.

62 Conference therefore endorses policy paper 166, *Patient-*
63 *Centred, Accessible and Preventive: A Liberal Vision for Primary*
64 *Health Care*, and its flagship policies that would rapidly and
65 reliably reverse this Labour Government's neglectful
66 mismanagement of NHS primary healthcare services and
67 restore the confidence of voters, including:

68 A. Giving patients more choice when booking general
69 practice appointments, including the option to either have
70 an appointment within a week at a time most convenient

Monday 21 September cont.

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- for them (or within 24 hours if urgent), or for a longer-
duration appointment with a healthcare professional with
whom they already have a relationship.
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- B. Expanding the Pharmacy First model to include new
services, and better integrate pharmacy into the NHS App.
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- C. End dental deserts including by removing the
administrative barriers that are preventing qualified
overseas dentists that are already living in England from
entirely filling the 2,500 dentist vacancies, with
appropriate safeguards and without impacting quality or
safety.
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- Conference in particular endorses the paper’s proposals to:
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1. Empower patients by keeping online booking open 24/7
for non-urgent requests, maintaining non-digital routes,
setting standards for usability and accessibility,
strengthening patient choice, improving shared care and
ending the GMC five-year rule for serious fitness-to-
practise concerns.
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2. Get general practice, community and neighbourhood
services, and hospitals working together under a patient-
centric model of primary and community care, including
by:
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- a) Better utilising spare 111 capacity to support GP
receptions at peak times and create pathways for
senior paramedics to join GP teams.
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- b) Reforming the Carr-Hill formula so that funding more
fairly reflects need.
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- c) Requiring developers to ensure there are enough
healthcare professionals when people move into new
developments.
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- d) Expanding support for low-income patients to access
primary care.
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3. Put community pharmacy on a sustainable footing by
properly rewarding an expanded Pharmacy First service,

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- 105 making it fairer for rural and coastal communities,
106 allowing NHS App booking, improving medicines safety
107 information and reviewing prescription charge
108 exemptions.
- 109 4. Repair NHS dentistry by replacing the Units of Dental
110 Activity contract with a prevention-focused model,
111 guaranteeing urgent and emergency appointments,
112 protecting check-ups for children and vulnerable groups,
113 supporting supervised toothbrushing, and expanding
114 dental recruitment and retention incentives in
115 underserved areas, which would especially benefit ethnic
116 minority communities.
- 117 5. Care for healthcare professionals as people themselves,
118 by making general practice more sustainable and
119 rewarding, freeing up GP time, supporting GPs to lead
120 multidisciplinary teams, embedding clinical pharmacists
121 and other qualified professionals safely, and creating
122 routes for experienced paramedics to join GP teams.
- 123 6. Support community optometry and high street providers
124 to deliver eye and ear care closer to home, including
125 glaucoma monitoring, cataract pathways, urgent minor
126 eye care, hearing aid fittings and minor ear infection
127 treatment, reducing unnecessary GP and hospital
128 appointments and helping people stay independent for
129 longer.

Applicability: England

Mover and summation combined: 16 minutes; mover and summation of amendments: 4 minutes; all other speakers: 3 minutes. For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see page 10.

In addition to speeches from the platform, voting members will be able to make concise (maximum one-minute) interventions from the floor during the debate on the motion. See pages 10-11 for further information.

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11.50 Speech

Chair: Chris Maines; Aide: Lord Pack

F28 Max Wilkinson MP (Spokesperson for Home Affairs)

12.05 Lunch break and fringe

Please see the Conference Directory for our fringe and exhibition programme.

14.55 Policy Motion

Chair: Paul McGarry; Aide: Alison Jenner; Hall Aide: Lord Mohammed

F29 Supporting People to Age Well

12 members

Mover: Alison Bennett MP (Spokesperson for Care and Carers)

Summation: Helen Maguire MP (Spokesperson for Primary Care and Cancer)

- 1
- Conference notes that:
- 2
- I. More than one in ten people over 65 years in the
- 3
- community live with frailty, and frailty affects over half of
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- adults in hospital or care home settings.
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- II. The number of people in the UK over the age of 85 is set
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- to double by 2045.
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- III. People who have kept the same GP for more than 15
- 8
- years had a 25 per cent lower chance of dying than those
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- with a GP relationship lasting a year or less.
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- IV. For older people and those with long-term conditions

Monday 21 September cont.

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- having the same GP helps avoid hospital admissions, which saves the NHS money in the long term.
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- V. Where integrated cross-sector teams for older people's care have been introduced, such as in Surrey Downs, there has been a fall in elderly admissions, shorter hospital stays, significantly reduced social care costs and 50 per cent fewer nursing home admissions.
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- VI. A third of people over 65, and half of people over 80, fall at least once a year; falls are the most common cause of death from injury in the over-65s, accounting for more than 50 per cent of admissions to hospital caused by unintentional injury and costing the NHS £4.6 million per day and over 4 million bed-days.
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- VII. Older people are more likely to live with neurological conditions, from dementia to Parkinson's, impairing quality of life and increasing their reliance on NHS services.
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- VIII. There are 2.1 million unpaid carers over the age of 65, and 420,000 over the age of 80, navigating the difficulties of caring for a loved one whilst ageing themselves.
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- Conference believes that:
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- i) Supporting people to improve quality of life and maintain independence is better for them, and better for the NHS by reducing hospital admissions and procedures; by empowering individuals to improve their own health, creating healthier environments, and funding communities to decide how to better their health, society will be stronger and better equipped to manage the challenges of an ageing population.
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- ii) Everyone who needs it deserves high-quality care and support to stay healthy in later life – that means fixing social care services and bringing forward measures that help people stay in better health for longer.
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- Conference reaffirms the Liberal Democrat commitment to:
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- A. Fix social care, including through sustained increases in

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- 46 funding for local authorities, which are the cornerstone of
- 47 the social care system, a higher Carer's Minimum Wage
- 48 and by better supporting family carers with guaranteed
- 49 respite care and a dedicated carer support service in every
- 50 hospital.
- 51 B. Give everyone 70+ and everyone with long-term health
- 52 conditions access to a named GP.
- 53 C. Tackle loneliness and isolation by refreshing the national
- 54 strategy for loneliness, to be overseen by a dedicated
- 55 Minister for Tackling Loneliness; and by expanding social
- 56 prescribing and investing in relevant community projects.
- 57 Conference calls on the Government to:
- 58 1. Introduce a dedicated frailty service in every community
- 59 which:
- 60 a) Ensures those arriving at hospital are identified by
- 61 frailty specialists who coordinate tailored care, with an
- 62 emphasis on providing care at home.
- 63 b) Ensures patients can discuss with frailty specialists the
- 64 outcomes they want for their health, living standards
- 65 and independence, with ongoing care reflecting these
- 66 preferences.
- 67 c) Works with local government, voluntary and state
- 68 sectors, as well as with family carers, to provide high-
- 69 quality tailored care in the community for patients
- 70 with frailty or complex needs.
- 71 d) Works in every nursing and residential home, bringing
- 72 the NHS to residents and ensuring they have quality
- 73 care, with an agreed care plan if they become very
- 74 unwell.
- 75 e) Ensures every frail patient and their carer has ongoing
- 76 support from pharmacists, nurses and others for
- 77 managing their health, including using medicines in
- 78 the correct way.
- 79 2. Invest in a major expansion of step-down care and home-

Monday 21 September cont.

- 80

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- based reablement to ensure people are always
guaranteed the timely intermediate care they need and
are not trapped in hospital.
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3. Prevent people needing to go to the hospital in the first
place through regular health assessments for people with
frailty or multiple conditions, overseen by a named GP
who would coordinate with paid and unpaid carers,
community nurses, therapists, and pharmacists.
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4. Equip GPs with the time and resources to ensure effective,
tailored follow-up care following these assessments,
including low-level interventions to improve quality of life
and health outcomes such as free ear wax removal,
switching a patient's incontinence supplies to reduce UTIs,
or ongoing pharmacist check-ins for help with using the
right medicine.
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5. Expand the capacity for district nursing by creating
alternative roles for people who retire from being
paramedics; this would enable them to undertake home
visits, urgent face-to-face assessments, post-discharge
follow-ups, and support patients with complex or multiple
conditions, working under the close supervision of GPs.
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6. Implement the recommendations of the Neurology
Alliance to ensure personalised care plans and care
coordinators for everyone with neurological conditions
such as dementia, Parkinson's and MS, and to cut
emergency admissions for these conditions by a third.
- 106

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7. Support Community Dental Services to ensure those who
are housebound, live in a care home, or have additional
health needs can access dental care.
- 109

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8. Roll out active ageing programmes and trips and falls
assessments for everyone over the age of 80 to prevent
falls, avoid unnecessary hospital admissions and promote
healthy ageing.
- 113

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115
9. Deliver fracture liaison services to every part of the
country within a year so that osteoporosis patients can
get the treatment they need, preventing long-term issues

Monday 21 September cont.

- 116 and costs to the NHS.
- 117 10. Establish a Commissioner for Older People and Ageing to
- 118 promote and protect the rights of older people, ensuring
- 119 policy across government departments takes account of
- 120 the challenges of an ageing population.

Applicability: England

Mover: 5 minutes; all other speakers: 3 minutes. For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see page 10.

The deadline for amendments to this motion is 13.00 Monday 7 September; see pages 11-12. Those selected for debate will be printed in Conference Extra and Monday's Conference Daily. The deadline for requests for separate votes is 09.00 Sunday 20 September; see page 9.

15.30 Speech

Chair: Chloe Hutchinson; Aide: To be confirmed

F30 Jane Dodds MS (Leader of the Welsh Liberal Democrats)

15.45 Policy motion

Chair: Jess Brown-Fuller MP; Aide: Cllr Nick da Costa (Chair, FCC);
Hall Aide: Charley Hasted

F31 Stopping Violence Against Women and Girls

Liberal Democrat Women

Mover: Donna Harris

Summation: Marie Goldman MP (Spokesperson for Women and Equalities)

- 1 Conference notes that:
- 2 A. Misogyny has evolved in the digital age, with the rise of
- 3 the 'manosphere' and 'incel culture' spreading hateful
- 4 ideologies linked to real-world violence.

Monday 21 September cont.

5 B. Over one in ten women in England have experienced
6 online violence, rising to 25 per cent among women aged
7 16–24 and 35 per cent among LGBT+ women.

8 C. Ethnic minority women are disproportionately targeted,
9 with black women 84 per cent more likely than white
10 women to be mentioned in abusive tweets.

11 D. A quarter of girls have been called degrading names
12 online, and one in five have received unwanted images.

13 E. Nearly three-quarters of Generation Z have encountered
14 misogynistic content online, with over half exposed at
15 least weekly.

16 F. Generative AI has enabled the creation of non-consensual
17 sexually explicit deepfakes and child sexual abuse
18 material, including via tools such as X’s chatbot Grok.

19 Conference further notes that:

20 I. Women and girls still experience disproportionately high
21 levels of online abuse, stalking, intimate image abuse and
22 technology-facilitated violence, despite the introduction of
23 the Online Safety Act 2023, the Victims and Courts Bill
24 2026 and the Crime and Policing Act 2026.

25 II. Ofcom’s *A Safer Life Online for Women and Girls* guidance,
26 published in November 2025, sets out voluntary measures
27 for platforms, with no review due before 2027.

28 III. The Government’s Violence Against Women and Girls
29 (VAWG) strategy, published in December 2025, includes
30 commitments to tackle online harms by 2029.

31 IV. Seven in 10 women believe that current legislation is
32 ineffective at tackling VAWG online.

33 Conference believes that:

34 A. Everyone, regardless of identity, has the right to live a life
35 free from fear and violence.

36 B. VAWG is a national emergency and tackling it must be a
37 priority at all levels of government.

38 C. Effective action on VAWG must recognise the distinct

Monday 21 September cont.

- 39
- experiences of minority women.
- 40
- D. The Labour Government, like its Conservative
- 41
- predecessors, is failing adequately to tackle online harms
- 42
- against women and girls.
- 43
- E. The law must keep pace with emerging technologies and
- 44
- evolving forms of abuse to protect women and girls.
- 45
- Conference reaffirms the Liberal Democrats' commitment to
- 46
- tackling VAWG in all its forms.
- 47
- Conference calls on the Government to:
- 48
1. Immediately bring into force all relevant sections of the
- 49
- Victims and Courts Bill 2026 and the Crime and Policing
- 50
- Act 2026.
- 51
2. Urgently review the Online Safety Act to ensure that
- 52
- Ofcom uses its enforcement powers earlier, as a first, not
- 53
- a last, resort to hold platforms to account.
- 54
3. Make Ofcom's guidance on VAWG an enforceable code of
- 55
- practice with real consequences for failure to comply.
- 56
4. Deliver all commitments on online harms in the VAWG
- 57
- Strategy without delay.
- 58
5. Require platforms to publish regular assessments of their
- 59
- role in facilitating misogynistic abuse and the steps taken
- 60
- to mitigate it.
- 61
6. Reinvest fines levied under the Online Safety Act into
- 62
- digital literacy, healthy relationships and online gender-
- 63
- based violence prevention education.
- 64
7. Extend police charging powers for lower-level VAWG
- 65
- offences, including online stalking, technology-facilitated
- 66
- domestic abuse and harassment, to speed up charging
- 67
- decisions and reduce victim disengagement.

Applicability: Federal except for 1. and 7. which are England and Wales

Mover: 7 minutes; summation of motion and movers and summation of any amendments: 4 minutes; all other speakers: 3 minutes. For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see page 10.

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The deadline for amendments to this motion is 13.00 Monday 7 September; see pages 11-12. Those selected for debate will be printed in Conference Extra and Monday's Conference Daily. The deadline for requests for separate votes is 09.00 Sunday 20 September; see page 9.

16.25 Party business

Chair: Cllr Sandra Gidley; Aide: Eleanor Kelly (Vice Chair, FCC); Hall Aide: Baroness Kitching

F32 Reports of the Parliamentary Parties

Movers: Wendy Chamberlain MP (Chief Whip of the Commons Parliamentary Party) and Lord Purvis (Leader of the Liberal Democrats in the House of Lords)

The deadline for questions for F32 is 13.00 on Monday 7 September. Questions selected will be published in Conference Extra and Monday's Conference Daily. These questions will be guaranteed an answer, either in the session or in writing thereafter.

Questions may also be submitted up until 12.05 on Monday 21 September; such questions are only taken at the discretion of the chair.

See page 6 for further information.

17.10 Emergency motions or topical issues

Chair: Baroness Doocey; Aide: Duncan Brack; Hall Aide: Baroness Pinnock

F33 Emergency motions or topical issue discussions

This slot has been reserved for the debate of emergency motions and / or discussion of topical issues. The deadline for emergency motions and for suggestions for topical issues is 13.00 on Monday 7 September. The motions or topics selected for debate or proposed for the ballot will be printed in Conference Extra and Monday's Conference Daily. See pages 5-6 and 11-12 for further information.

18.00 Close of session

Tuesday 22 September

09.00 Emergency motions or topical issues

F34 Emergency motions or topical issue discussions

Chair: Chris Maines; Aide: Eleanor Kelly (Vice Chair, FCC); Hall Aide: Cllr Sandra Gidley

This slot has been reserved for the debate of emergency motions and / or discussion of topical issues. The deadline for emergency motions and for suggestions for topical issues is 13.00 on Monday 7 September. The motions or topics selected for debate or proposed for the ballot will be printed in Conference Extra and Tuesday's Conference Daily. See pages 5-6 and 11-12 for further information.

10.00 Policy Motion

Chair: Cllr Jon Ball; Aide: Duncan Brack; Hall Aide: Charley Hasted

F35 Sovereignty in the Age of AI

12 members

Mover: Victoria Collins MP (Spokesperson for Science, Innovation and Technology)

Summation: Helen Wood

- 1
- Conference notes:
- 2
- a) The UK is a global powerhouse in the tech sector, and a
- 3
- world leader in artificial intelligence, with the third largest
- 4
- market in the world.
- 5
- b) The UK's academic and research foundations are world-
- 6
- leading, with the UK ranking first among all G7 countries
- 7
- for field-weighted citation impact in science and
- 8
- technology research.
- 9
- c) That 71 per cent of UK businesses cite unclear rules as a
- 10
- barrier to adopting AI, and 57 per cent of the banking
- 11
- sector cite regulatory uncertainty as an investment
- 12
- barrier.

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13 d) That 93 per cent of seed-funded startups fail to access
14 follow-on funding in the UK, creating a severe scale-up
15 funding gap.

16 e) That a stark AI skills divide is growing in schools, with state
17 school teachers half as likely to receive formal AI training
18 as private school teachers.

19 f) 55 per cent of central government organisations host over
20 60 per cent of their digital estate on clouds supplied by
21 just two US-based providers, making critical digital
22 infrastructure vulnerable.

23 Conference believes that:

24 I. Only a distinctly Liberal approach can empower people to
25 seize the benefits of AI, balancing innovation with holding
26 powerful big tech companies to account.

27 II. Britain has the talent, research base and skills to lead the
28 world in responsible AI, and needs a government willing to
29 back that ambition.

30 III. Deep public and business trust is the essential engine
31 connecting technological adoption, regulatory certainty
32 and long-term commercial investment.

33 IV. AI investment must be integrated directly into an
34 industrial strategy to solve real problems across priority
35 sectors like healthcare, energy and manufacturing.

36 V. Digital infrastructure expansion must be sustainable,
37 strategic and purposefully planned to ensure that people
38 benefit directly from investment in their communities.

39 VI. Education must focus on enduring, foundational skills like
40 critical thinking and problem-solving, rather than merely
41 tool-specific knowledge that transforms rapidly.

42 Conference reaffirms Liberal Democrat pledges to:

43 A. Increase research budgets with inflation and move
44 towards multi-year funding settlements, and commit to
45 introducing a national and international science and
46 technology strategy that raises R&D spending to 3.5 per

Tuesday 22 September cont.

- 47 cent of GDP.
- 48 B. Quintuple proof-of-concept funding to £200 million across
- 49 five years.
- 50 C. Create a network of regional innovation centres across the
- 51 UK, ensuring that every nation and major English region
- 52 can support university-industry collaboration with state-
- 53 of-the-art research facilities.
- 54 D. Introduce government-backed seed funding loans for
- 55 companies born from university research, and expand the
- 56 definition of commercialisation so that university-derived
- 57 SMEs and student startups are eligible.
- 58 E. Attract international talent by reforming visa processes to
- 59 replace arbitrary salary thresholds with a flexible merit-
- 60 based system and allowing Masters and PhD students to
- 61 found startups during their studies.
- 62 Conference calls on the UK Government to back British
- 63 innovation and remove barriers to financing by:
- 64 i) Closing the scale-up gaps by reviewing the £250,000 Seed
- 65 Enterprise Investment Scheme limit and creating a
- 66 scientist-led upfront pre-clearance system for R&D tax
- 67 reliefs.
- 68 ii) Prioritising world-leading British tech in public contracts
- 69 and trialling a 30 per cent 'social value' requirement for
- 70 the procurement of digital services.
- 71 iii) Integrating AI into industrial strategies under a new
- 72 Department for Growth, and extending Treasury and OBR
- 73 forecast horizons to assess long-term technological
- 74 impacts and provide certainty to investors.
- 75 iv) Creating 'AI Sandbox' programmes in partnership with
- 76 local authorities, where startups and local SMEs can test
- 77 new AI service models in small-scale realistic settings.
- 78 v) Developing an AI Compute Foundations Strategy
- 79 prioritising domestic strengths in low-power inference,
- 80 chip design, and edge AI.

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- 81 Conference also calls on the Government to build trust
- 82 amongst the public through empowering individuals to use AI
- 83 by:
- 84 a) Establishing a National People’s Strategy which integrates
- 85 AI skills into the curriculum, and continuing training
- 86 throughout an individual’s professional life with an AI
- 87 training guarantee for adults.
- 88 a) Widening the scope of the AI Security Institute to include
- 89 ethical considerations, ensuring that AI systems are
- 90 developed to use data responsibly and do not entrench
- 91 existing inequalities.
- 92 c) Securing international leadership by upholding the
- 93 Council of Europe AI Framework Convention and using it
- 94 to pioneer enforceable multilateral standards for
- 95 democratic AI governance.
- 96 Conference further calls on the Government to ensure that
- 97 communities can benefit from AI opportunities by:
- 98 1. Developing a comprehensive digital sovereignty strategy
- 99 using strategic sovereign procurement policy to protect
- 100 critical public functions from total foreign dependence.
- 101 2. Requiring all new AI infrastructure to meet community
- 102 benefit standards, ensuring local populations directly gain
- 103 from new developments through local jobs, skills training
- 104 and directing their waste heat to district heating networks
- 105 or to generating electricity.
- 106 3. Confronting the AI energy dilemma by commissioning
- 107 independent demand assessments and establishing
- 108 regional data clusters and AI Growth Zones, designed
- 109 alongside industry and connected directly to target
- 110 sectors.
- 111 4. Ensuring rural and remote communities can fully seize the
- 112 opportunities of the AI age through a national
- 113 commitment to roll out gigabit broadband to every home
- 114 and business, while embedding access and upskilling
- 115 hubs in local libraries and community centres.

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Applicability: Federal, except for a) which is England only.

Mover: 7 minutes; summation of motion and movers and summation of any amendments: 4 minutes; all other speakers: 3 minutes. For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see page 10.

The deadline for amendments to this motion is 13.00 Monday 7 September; see pages 11-12. Those selected for debate will be printed in Conference Extra and Tuesday's Conference Daily. The deadline for requests for separate votes is 09.00 Monday 21 September; see page 9.

10.40 Policy Motion

Chair: Jeremy Hargreaves MBE; Aide: Chloe Hutchinson; Hall Aide: Baroness Kitching

F36 Restoring our Waters: Britain's Water Company Crisis

14 members

Mover: Tim Farron MP (Spokesperson for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs)
Summation: Charlie Maynard MP (Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury)

- 1 Conference notes that:
- 2 I. The privatised water industry model has completely failed;
- 3 water companies have accumulated £70 billion in debt
- 4 and paid out £83 billion in inflation-adjusted dividends
- 5 since privatisation - compared to just £236 billion spent on
- 6 infrastructure over the same period.
- 7 II. Up to 20 per cent of an average customer's water bill now
- 8 goes purely to servicing corporate debt, rising to 28 per
- 9 cent for Thames Water customers.
- 10 III. An average of 3 billion litres of water is wasted every day
- 11 in England and Wales due to leaky pipes, with Thames
- 12 Water ranking as the worst offender with a three-year
- 13 average of 592 million litres lost per day.
- 14 IV. Over 2.5 million households are currently in debt to their
- 15 water company, highlighting a growing crisis of water

Tuesday 22 September cont.

- 16 poverty across the country.
- 17 V. Liberal Democrats have consistently led the charge for
- 18 structural reform, having called since November 2022 for
- 19 the replacement of Ofwat, a position vindicated by the
- 20 Independent Water Commission’s final report in July 2025.
- 21 VI. Water companies continue to discharge sewage at
- 22 unknown volumes into rivers, lakes, and coastlines while
- 23 simultaneously handing out massive executive bonuses
- 24 and failing to invest in fixing crumbling infrastructure.
- 25 VII. Both Labour and the Conservatives refused to support
- 26 any of the 44 amendments tabled by the Liberal
- 27 Democrats to the Water (Special Measures) Bill, which
- 28 covered pollution targets, executive bonus bans, volume
- 29 monitoring and mutual ownership.
- 30 VIII. Failing water companies are currently negotiating
- 31 restructuring deals with creditors at billpayers’ expense,
- 32 despite clearly meeting the insolvency and performance
- 33 grounds, set out in legislation, which should trigger them
- 34 being taken into an administration process.
- 35 IX. Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) also known as
- 36 ‘forever chemicals’, have been found in all but one of
- 37 tested UK rivers, harming nature and human health.
- 38 Conference believes that:
- 39 A. Profit must never again be put before the environment,
- 40 public health or billpayers.
- 41 B. It is essential that water companies operate on a stable
- 42 financial footing, so that they can afford to invest in the
- 43 things that matter – upgrading infrastructure, increasing
- 44 capacity at sewage treatment works, cleaning up lakes,
- 45 rivers and seas and improving customer service.
- 46 C. Ofwat is entirely unfit to hold failing monopolies to
- 47 account, and the current regulatory framework must be
- 48 fundamentally replaced, not just rebranded.
- 49 D. True environmental justice and long-term financial

Tuesday 22 September cont.

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- sustainability can only be achieved by moving away from shareholder-first structures towards a model that puts public benefit at its heart.
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- E. Mutually owned public benefit corporations owned by customers, professionally managed and free from the control of unaccountable investors represent the most credible alternative to the broken privatised model.
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- F. Under a mutual model, investment in renewing water assets would take priority over dividend payouts, offering the most direct route to ending the sewage crisis.
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- G. Water poverty is a serious and growing injustice, and no household should be unable to afford a basic necessity while water companies reward executives and service corporate debt.
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- H. Transparency and data accountability are essential for tackling pollution; without accurate volume monitoring of sewage spills, meaningful targets cannot be set and enforcement cannot follow.
- 68
- Conference calls on the Government to:
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1. Replace Ofwat urgently with a new, powerful Clean Water Authority with the statutory powers to end the sewage scandal, ban unjustified bonuses and hold water executives legally accountable (while allocating Ofwat powers in Wales to Natural Resources Wales).
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2. Convert failing water companies into Mutually Owned Public Benefit Corporations that are professionally managed, jointly owned by customers, with all surpluses reinvested directly into the water system rather than paid out as dividends.
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3. Require water companies to monitor and publish live volume data for sewage spills, not just the duration of the spill, to ensure that pollution can be accurately measured, transparently reported and effectively targeted.
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4. Introduce a nation-wide single social tariff for water bills to guarantee that vulnerable households are protected

Tuesday 22 September cont.

- 85
- from sky-rocketing costs.
- 86
5. Publish a clear policy setting out when the Environment
- 87
- Secretary will make an application to the High Court to
- 88
- place a failing water company into a SAR, as
- 89
- recommended by the Cunliffe Review.
- 90
6. Create an additional environmental trigger for Special
- 91
- Administration of water companies, transferring
- 92
- operations to a mutual benefit model where there is
- 93
- chronic or egregious environmental failure.
- 94
7. Establish an Environmental Improvement Objective so
- 95
- that the new regulator does not repeat Ofwat’s failure to
- 96
- invest in nature and enforce environmental standards.
- 97
8. Pursue a four nations agreement to introduce a PFAS
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- restriction to prevent the manufacture and release of
- 99
- ‘forever chemicals’, alongside a PFAS remediation fund
- 100
- requiring polluters to pay for cleaning up forever chemical
- 101
- pollution.

Applicability: England and Wales except for 8. which is Federal.

Mover: 7 minutes; summation of motion and movers and summation of any amendments: 4 minutes; all other speakers: 3 minutes. For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see page 10.

The deadline for amendments to this motion is 13.00 Monday 7 September; see pages 11-12. Those selected for debate will be printed in Conference Extra and Tuesday’s Conference Daily. The deadline for requests for separate votes is 09.00 Monday 21 September; see page 9.

11.25 Speech

Chair: Paul McGarry; Aide: Baroness Pinnock

F37 Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP, Leader of the Scottish Liberal Democrats

Tuesday 22 September cont.

11.40 Policy motion

Chair: Lucas North; Aide: Jess Brown-Fuller MP; Hall Aide: Alison Jenner

F38 Tackling Illegal E-Bikes and Dangerous Riding

14 members

Mover: Olly Glover MP (Spokesperson for Transport)

Summation: To be announced

- 1 Conference notes that:
- 2 i) Liberal Democrats champion cycling as a vital tool to
- 3 improve public health, reduce toxic air pollution and
- 4 relieve urban traffic congestion.
- 5 ii) The Liberal Democrats were the first UK political party to
- 6 adopt the recommendations of the landmark ‘Get Britain
- 7 Cycling’ report as official party policy.
- 8 iii) The UK’s estimated full market size for e-bikes in 2025 was
- 9 149,000 units.
- 10 iv) While motor vehicles remain by far the greatest cause of
- 11 death and injury on the roads, public concern is rising
- 12 over the dangerous misuse of illegally modified or
- 13 unregulated e-bikes on pavements and in pedestrianised
- 14 zones.
- 15 v) In May 2024, changes to the law via the Criminal Justice
- 16 Bill established that causing death or serious injury by
- 17 dangerous or careless cycling is a criminal offence,
- 18 carrying maximum penalties of up to 14 years in prison.
- 19 vi) A proliferation of unregulated, oversized, and illegal e-
- 20 bikes capable of excessive speeds are posing risks to
- 21 pedestrians, particularly the elderly, children and disabled
- 22 individuals.
- 23 vii) These high-speed, illegal e-bikes are increasingly being
- 24 weaponised by criminal gangs and used to facilitate anti-
- 25 social behaviour.
- 26 viii) The current regulatory system for e-bikes is confusing,

Tuesday 22 September cont.

- 27 outdated, and seldom enforced, meaning that the
- 28 unrestricted online sale of illegal modification kits and
- 29 high-power bikes continues entirely unchecked.
- 30 Conference believes that:
- 31 a) Everyone has the right to feel safe on streets and
- 32 pavements, and cyclists must recognise their clear duty of
- 33 care towards pedestrians and other commuters.
- 34 b) Dangerous or criminal riders must not be above the law,
- 35 and the reputational damage caused by illegal e-bikes
- 36 risks undermining the broader public case for legal, green
- 37 active travel.
- 38 c) The vast majority of delivery drivers, couriers, and
- 39 everyday cyclists are law-abiding individuals trying to earn
- 40 a living or travel sustainably, and they deserve protection
- 41 from rampant e-bike theft.
- 42 d) Enforcement action by the police alone cannot solve this
- 43 crisis; the government must aggressively tackle the supply
- 44 chain and unrestricted online marketplaces that flood the
- 45 streets with illegal vehicles.
- 46 e) Multi-million-pound courier and gig-economy platforms
- 47 must take corporate responsibility for the safety, vehicle
- 48 legality, and road conduct of the riders operating on their
- 49 apps.
- 50 Conference calls on the Government to:
- 51 1. Implement strict restrictions or bans on the online sale
- 52 and importation of illegal high-power e-bikes, untethered
- 53 conversion kits, and oversized electric vehicles that breach
- 54 standard Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycle safety limits.
- 55 2. Overhaul the confusing existing legal framework to
- 56 provide clear, updated definitions separating legal active
- 57 travel from high-speed, unregistered light electric vehicles.
- 58 3. Provide police forces with updated training to confidently
- 59 spot, intercept and confiscate illegally modified bikes,
- 60 ensuring that dangerous cycling laws are robustly

Tuesday 22 September cont.

- 61 enforced.
- 62 4. Establish statutory liability standards for gig-economy
- 63 delivery platforms, legally requiring them to verify that
- 64 their riders utilise road-legal vehicles, hold valid insurance
- 65 and comply with traffic laws.
- 66 5. Deliver a comprehensive nation-wide active travel strategy
- 67 that invests in secure bike infrastructure to combat theft,
- 68 alongside dedicated cycle paths between key transport
- 69 links to keep pedestrians and legal cyclists safe.
- 70 6. Take steps to enforce compliance of e-bike and delivery
- 71 drivers with the Highway Code.

Applicability: Federal, except for 3 which is England and Wales, and 5. and 6. which are England only.

Mover: 5 minutes; all other speakers: 3 minutes. For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see page 10.

The deadline for amendments to this motion is 13.00 Monday 7 September; see pages 11-12. Those selected for debate will be printed in Conference Extra and Tuesday's Conference Daily. The deadline for requests for separate votes is 09.00 Monday 21 September; see page 9.

12.10 Policy motion

Chair: James Gurling OBE; Aide: Dr Chris Adams (Vice Chair, FCC);
Hall Aide: Chloe Hutchinson

F39 Feeding Britain: A Food Security Emergency

12 members

Mover: Sarah Dyke MP (Spokesperson for Rural Affairs)
Summation: Alistair Carmichael MP (Chair, DEFRA Select
 Committee)

- 1 Conference notes that:
- 2 A. In the past decade, the UK has experienced the highest
- 3 food price inflation in 40 years.
- 4 B. The proportion of food-secure households has fallen from

Tuesday 22 September cont.

- 5 92 per cent in 2020 to 90 per cent in 2023, meaning that
6 hundreds of thousands of families can no longer reliably
7 put food on the table.
- 8 C. The UK sources food from domestic production and trade
9 at a roughly 60:40 ratio, leaving it dangerously exposed to
10 global shocks.
- 11 D. Extreme weather events continue to have a significant
12 effect on domestic production, hitting arable crops, fruit
13 and vegetables hardest.
- 14 E. Conflict in the Middle East has driven up oil, gas and
15 fertiliser costs, with those increases rippling through the
16 entire supply chain until they land on the weekly shop.
- 17 F. The Food and Drink Federation expects food inflation to
18 reach at least 9 per cent by the end of the year.
- 19 G. No income group meets dietary recommendations, with
20 the poorest 10 per cent eating on average 42 per cent less
21 fruit and vegetables than recommended, compared to the
22 richest, who eat 13 per cent less.
- 23 H. Disruptions to the food supply chain can arise from a
24 range of risks such as extreme weather events, cyber
25 attacks, global conflicts or pandemics.
- 26 Conference further notes that:
- 27 I. In England, the agricultural budget was frozen at £2.4
28 billion between 2019 and 2024, while farm input costs
29 rose by 44 per cent over the same period.
- 30 II. Straw costs more than doubled, while the costs of
31 electricity, fertiliser, animal feed and motor fuels all rose
32 between 38 per cent and 50 per cent, and interest rates
33 on loans and overdrafts increased by 600 per cent.
- 34 III. Under the Conservatives, farm payments fell by 20 per
35 cent in real terms since 2015, equivalent to the loss of
36 £722 million in public funding for farmers, and the
37 government consistently underspent even its frozen
38 budget.

Tuesday 22 September cont.

39 IV. Labour has now cut the farming budget in England by a
40 further £100 million a year.

41 V. 90 per cent of the population want to see more food
42 produced in the UK.

43 Conference believes that:

44 a) In an unstable world, Britain must become far more self-
45 sufficient, especially when it comes to food.

46 b) The failure of both Conservative and Labour governments
47 has been to create a false equivalence between nature
48 and farming, as if we must choose between them.

49 c) It is outrageous that England is the only country in Europe
50 whose farm payments scheme does not explicitly support
51 food security.

52 d) UK production of some of the most nourishing foods,
53 such as beans, fruits and vegetables, is stalling because it
54 no longer offers a viable livelihood for farmers.

55 e) Liberal Democrats believe that caring for nature and
56 producing food go hand in hand, and that a properly
57 funded farming sector is essential to both.

58 f) Long-term food security requires farming practices that
59 actively improve soil quality and enhance the natural
60 environment.

61 g) Farmers and land managers are the stewards of the
62 countryside, and if they are not properly supported there
63 will be no one to restore the natural environment and halt
64 declining biodiversity.

65 h) The quality of locally produced food is higher and it is
66 more nutritious; it also provides investment in the
67 community.

68 Conference calls for:

69 1. A Good Food Bill for England to be introduced by the
70 Government, setting binding targets on food security to
71 support sustainable domestic food production in
72 harmony with the environment

Tuesday 22 September cont.

- 73 2. A £1 billion increase in the farming budget to support
74 farmers.
- 75 3. The UK Government to agree with the devolved
76 administrations a UK-wide food-security target requiring
77 the UK to produce at least 75 per cent of its own food by
78 2035, with targets around locally produced food.
- 79 4. A new seasonal agricultural workers scheme with
80 guaranteed minimum standards to ensure that harvests
81 are not lost to labour shortages, decided on an annual
82 basis.
- 83 5. A public procurement requirement for schools, hospitals
84 and government canteens in England to source a
85 minimum percentage of food from the UK.
- 86 6. A ban on the practice of shrinkflation, requiring clear
87 labelling when product sizes are reduced without a
88 proportional price reduction.
- 89 7. Enhanced payments for Environmental Land Management
90 Schemes to support nature-friendly farming and protect
91 long-term food security.
- 92 8. Support for farms to protect the environment by
93 permanently reopening applications for the Sustainable
94 Farming Incentive and pledging not to close it again.
- 95 9. A statutory requirement for the government to publish an
96 annual food security audit, with accountability to
97 Parliament.
- 98 10. Implementation of Local Food Plans where local
99 authorities in England assess food accessibility within
100 their areas, integrating supply chains and economic
101 growth strategies to address whether all citizens can
102 access nutritious meals.

Applicability: England except for 3., 4., 6., and 9. which are Federal.

Mover: 7 minutes; summation of motion and movers and summation of any amendments: 4 minutes; all other speakers: 3 minutes. For eligibility and procedure for speaking in this debate, see page 10.

Tuesday 22 September cont.

The deadline for amendments to this motion is 13.00 Monday 7 September; see pages 11-12. Those selected for debate will be printed in Conference Extra and Tuesday's Conference Daily. The deadline for requests for separate votes is 09.00 Monday 21 September; see page 9.

12.50 Lunch break and fringe

Please see the Conference Directory for our fringe and exhibition programme.

14.10 Party business

Chair: Cllr Nick da Costa (Chair, FCC); Aide: Eleanor Kelly (Vice Chair, FCC); Hall Aide: Dr Chris Adams (Vice Chair, FCC)

F40 Party Awards

The Belinda Eyre-Brook Award:

Given to recognise and celebrate the efforts of people working for our elected representatives in their local areas.

The Dadabhai Naoroji Award:

Presented annually to the local party that has done most to promote ethnic minority participants to elected office.

The Harriet Smith Liberal Democrat Distinguished Service Award:

Open to any party member never elected to public office recognised for outstanding commitment and service to the party.

The Patsy Calton Award:

An award for exceptional women, ranging from councillors to members to Parliamentarians.

The Penhaligon Award:

Presented to the local party anywhere in the world which demonstrates the most impressive increase in membership and exemplary activities to deliver and involve members and supporters.

The President's Award:

Open to any party member elected to public office who has demonstrated excellence and commitment.

Tuesday 22 September cont.

14.30 Speech

Chair: Cllr Nick da Costa (Chair, FCC); Aide: Eleanor Kelly (Vice Chair, FCC); Hall Aide: Dr Chris Adams (Vice Chair, FCC)

F41 Sir Ed Davey MP, Leader of the Liberal Democrats

15.30 approx. Close of conference

Standing Orders

Glossary of terms

Business motion

A proposal to conduct the affairs of the Party in a particular way or to express an opinion on the way affairs have been conducted.

Business amendment

A proposal to change a business motion. *Any such proposal should be significant, should be within the scope of the original motion and must not be a direct negative.*

Committee

Throughout these standing orders, Committee means the Federal Conference Committee unless otherwise qualified.

Constitutional amendment

A proposal to change the constitution of the Party.

Secondary constitutional amendment

An amendment to a constitutional amendment. *This must not introduce new material.*

Consultative session

A meeting where selected areas of policy or strategy are considered in greater depth than is possible in full debates.

Day visitor

Someone who has paid the appropriate day visitor fee. Day visitors are not entitled to speak or vote in full sessions of conference.

Emergency motion

A proposal which derives from a significant recent development which occurred after the deadline for submission of motions. ***Emergency motions must be brief (maximum 500 words).***

Emergency amendment

An amendment to a motion which relates to a specific event which occurred after the deadline for the submission of amendments. ***It must be brief and uncontentious.***

Full session

Any part of the conference agenda during which debates, topical issue discussions or discussion of business, including formal

Standing Orders

reports, takes place. This specifically excludes formal speeches such as those by the Leader or Party Officers.

Point of order

A suggestion to the chair of a debate that the conduct of the debate, as laid down in the standing orders, has not been followed correctly.

Policy motion

A proposal to adopt a new policy or reaffirm an existing one. This includes motions accompanying policy papers.

Policy amendment

A proposal to change a policy motion. *Any proposal should be of significant importance, should be within the scope of the original motion and must not be a direct negative.*

Policy paper

A paper prepared by the Federal Policy Committee and submitted to conference for debate under the terms of Article 7.4 of the Federal Party constitution.

Procedural motion

A proposal that the conduct of a debate should be changed in a specific way. Procedural motions are:

Move to next business

A proposal that the conference should cease to consider an item of business and immediately move to the next item on the agenda.

Reference back

A proposal to refer a motion or amendment to a named body of the Party for further consideration.

Request for a count

A request to the chair that a specific vote be counted and recorded rather than decided on the chair's assessment of a show of voting cards.

Separate vote

A request to the chair of a debate that a part or parts of a motion or amendment should be voted on separately.

Standing Orders

Suspension of standing orders

A proposal to relax specific standing orders for a stated purpose.

Special conference

An additional meeting of the conference requisitioned by the Federal Board, Federal Policy Committee, conference itself or 2% of party members, in not fewer than 10% of local parties under the provisions of Article 6.3 of the Federal constitution.

Standing order amendment

A proposal to change these standing orders.

Secondary standing order amendment

An amendment to a standing order amendment. This must not introduce new material.

Topical issue discussion

A discussion on a policy issue of significant and topical relevance, conducted without a vote.

Voting member

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

Standing Orders for a conference held remotely

- a. In the event that the Federal Board determines it is impossible to hold a conference under the normal rules, and instead summons a special meeting of the conference to be held remotely, or the Committee otherwise directs that a conference shall be conducted remotely, these Standing Orders shall apply
- b. A remote conference shall be conducted in accordance with the Standing Orders that apply to a conference not conducted remotely ("the original Standing Orders"), save that:
 - i. All references in the original Standing Orders to votes, whether by ballot, show of hands or show of voting cards, shall instead be conducted via an online poll or alternative secure method of online voting, designated

Standing Orders

by the Committee; similarly all references to speakers cards shall be taken to mean electronic speakers' cards.

- ii. Any communications with the chair must be made via an online channel designated by the Committee for that purpose and advertised to voting members prior to the commencement of a debate.
- iii. In original Standing Order 6.2, the reference to the Chief Steward shall also include lead moderators designated by the Chief Steward.
- iv. Original Standing Order 8.7 shall apply save that the Committee may set a deadline in respect of any given full session for the receipt of electronic speakers' cards; the chair shall have discretion to electronic speakers' cards after the deadline.
- v. Original Standing Orders 9.1, 9.2, 11.4 and Procedural motion 3 (Request for a Count) in the Glossary of Terms, shall not apply; instead, voting members shall, when appropriate, be directed by the chair to vote using the online voting tool made available to them. Standing Order 2.3 shall not apply.
- vi. In original Standing Order 10.1, any voting member may signal to the Chair via the designated online channel, that they are moving a point of order, in lieu of rising in their place.
- vii. As, by necessity, all votes shall be counted votes, Standing Order 11.4 shall not apply; instead the chair shall ensure the result of the counted vote is publicised to members, via the appropriate online channel.

Standing Orders for the Federal Conference

1. The Conference Agenda

1.1 What is on the agenda

The agenda for each meeting of conference, other than a special conference, shall include time for:

Standing Orders

- a) One or more consultative sessions; save that the Committee may decide not to hold any consultative sessions at a spring conference;
- b) A business session or sessions for the consideration of reports from the bodies listed in Article 6.5 of the Constitution, together with, when appropriate, reports from, or question and answer sessions with, any other body the Committee considers appropriate, accounts and the annual report;
- c) Business motions, including a motion accompanying the proposed strategy of the party;
- d) Constitutional amendments and standing order amendments;
- e) Policy motions (including motions accompanying policy papers);
- f) Emergency motions;
- g) Topical issue discussions; and
- h) Any other business which the Committee thinks appropriate.

The time to be allocated to each type of business and the order of that business shall be decided by the Committee provided that conference may decide not to take any particular item on the agenda.

1.2 Conference or council of state parties

In addition, time before or after any meeting may be agreed with the relevant state party for a meeting of the conference or council of that party.

1.3 Right to submit agenda items

- a) Reports to Conference may be submitted only by the bodies listed in paragraph 1.1(b).
- b) Business motions (including amendments and emergency business motions and amendments), constitutional amendments and secondary constitutional amendments, standing order amendments and secondary standing order amendments may be submitted by the Federal Board, Federal Policy Committee, Federal Council, Federal Conference Committee, state parties, regional parties in England, local parties, Affiliated Organisations and 10

Standing Orders

party members save that constitutional amendments and secondary constitutional amendments, and standing order amendments and secondary standing order amendments, submitted by party members shall need to be submitted by 30 members from at least three local parties.

- c) Motions accompanying policy papers may only be submitted by the Federal Policy Committee.
- d) Policy motions (including amendments, emergency policy motions and amendments) may be submitted by the Federal Policy Committee, state parties, regional parties in England, local parties, Affiliated Organisations and 10 party members.
- e) The Parliamentary Party in the House of Commons may submit a motion relating to supporting a government containing members of the other parties, in accordance with Article 24 of the constitution.
- f) Proposals for topical issue discussions may be submitted by any party member.

1.4 How motions and amendments are submitted

All motions and amendments must be submitted to the Committee. They must identify a person authorised to agree to their being composited or redrafted. The details of methods of submission will be notified for each conference via the Party website.

1.5 The deadlines by which motions, amendments, reports and questions to reports must be submitted

The Committee shall specify:

- a) The closing date for the receipt of policy motions (including motions accompanying policy papers), business motions, constitutional amendments and amendments to standing orders, which shall be at least eight weeks before the start of conference.
- b) The closing date for the receipt of amendments to motions published in the Agenda and emergency motions, which shall be at least two days before the start of conference.
- c) The closing date for the submission of written reports from the bodies listed in paragraph 1.1(b), which will be set so as to enable their distribution with the Agenda.

Standing Orders

Any supplementary report submitted later than this deadline may only be tabled at conference with the permission of the Committee.

- d) The closing date for the submission of questions to any of the reports listed in the Agenda, which shall be the same as the deadline for emergency motions. Questions submitted by this deadline are guaranteed to be asked.
- e) Notwithstanding 1.5(d), questions may always be submitted to any of the reports listed in the Agenda, by the end of the preceding morning (for report sessions taking place in the afternoon) or afternoon (for report sessions taking place in the morning). Any questions submitted by this deadline will only be taken at the discretion of the chair.
- f) The closing date for proposals for topical issue discussions, which shall be at least two days before the start of conference

1.6 Notification of deadlines

All dates specified under Standing Order 1.5 shall be publicised to party members and bodies entitled to submit motions. Publication in the party newspaper/magazine and website may be treated as notice for this purpose.

1.7 Later deadlines in special circumstances

In special circumstances the Committee may specify later dates than those indicated above. In particular, where developments which, in the opinion of the Committee, are of great importance have taken place after the closing date for emergency motions and questions to reports, the Committee may make time available for an additional emergency motion or for a statement to be made on behalf of the Party or for additional questions to be submitted to reports.

2. Consultative Sessions

2.1 The subjects for consultative sessions

The subjects for debate at consultative sessions shall be chosen by the Committee on the advice of the Federal Policy Committee and, where appropriate, the Federal Board, and published in the Agenda. Two or more such sessions may be held simultaneously.

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2.2 Speaking at consultative sessions

Any member of the Party may be called to speak at a consultative session and, with the approval of the chair, non-members with relevant expertise may also be called.

2.3 Voting at consultative sessions

At the discretion of the chair a vote by show of hands may be taken to indicate the weight of opinion among members present on any issue that has been debated.

3. The Agenda

3.1 The shortlisting of motions

The Committee shall draw up the Agenda and shall decide which of the motions duly submitted shall be included in it. The Committee may allocate time for one or more policy or business motions to be selected by ballot. Copies of motions not selected shall be available for inspection and will be supplied to any party member on payment of a copying charge and postage.

3.2 Motions for the amendment of the constitution or standing orders

Save as detailed below in Standing Order 4.3, all proposed amendments to the constitution or standing orders must be selected for debate.

3.3 Balance between State and Federal policy debates

The Committee shall, in drawing up the Agenda, have due regard to the balance of State and Federal policy debates and in particular shall as far as possible organise the agenda so that all matters which relate solely to one or more state parties but not all State Parties or the Federal Party shall be considered at either the beginning or the end of the conference.

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4. Selection of Motions and Amendments

4.1 Compositing or otherwise altering motions

In drawing up the Agenda the Committee shall seek to reflect the range of views in the Party as indicated by the motions and amendments submitted. The Committee may:

- a) Treat any severable part of a motion or amendment as a separate motion or amendment.
- b) Redraft a motion or amendment so as to improve expression, remove inaccuracy or superfluity or take account of new developments.
- c) Composite similar motions or amendments.

4.2 Selection of amendments

The Committee shall decide which of the amendments duly submitted to each motion shall be selected. No amendment shall be selected if, in the opinion of the Committee it is insubstantial, outside the scope of the motion, or tantamount to a direct negative of the motion.

4.3 Motions for the amendment of the constitution or standing orders

The Committee may refuse to select a motion for amendment of the constitution or standing orders if, in their opinion, it is:

- a) Similar in effect to another motion which has been selected for debate or ballot at the same meeting of conference.
- b) Similar in effect to a motion that has been rejected at either of the last two meetings of conference.
- c) In the case of amendments to the constitution, incomplete in that it leaves unamended some other part of the constitution which contradicts the meaning of the amendment.
- d) In the case of amendments to standing orders, incomplete in that it leaves unamended some other part of standing orders which contradicts the meaning of the amendment.
- e) Ambiguous.

4.4 Emergency motions

The Committee may reject an emergency motion if:

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- a) It is similar in effect to another motion that has been selected for debate or ballot.
- b) It is similar in effect to a subject chosen for a topical issue discussion.
- c) It is unclear as to its meaning or intent or is, in the opinion of the Committee, too poorly drafted to provide a sensible basis for debate.
- d) It falls outside the definition of emergency motions.

No amendment shall be taken to any motion selected under this Standing Order.

4.5 Ballots for emergency motions

All emergency motions, except those rejected under Standing Order 4.4, must be placed either on the agenda for debate or in a ballot for selection by Conference. The Committee may hold separate ballots to select which of a range of emergency policy motions and which of a range of emergency business motions to debate. If one or more ballots is held the Committee shall circulate the text of all balloted motions to the voting members as soon as practicable and shall specify a closing time for the ballot. Following the counting of any ballots the Committee shall decide how many motions shall be debated in the time available.

4.6 Emergency amendments

The Committee shall have complete discretion whether to select emergency amendments for debate.

4.7 Topical issue discussions

The choice of subjects for topical issue discussions shall be made by the Officers of the Committee in consultation with the Officers of the Federal Policy Committee. In choosing the subjects, the Officers shall have regard to the significance and topicality of the subjects proposed and whether they are likely to provoke a lively discussion.

5. Special Meetings

5.1 Timetabling of special meetings

The Committee shall, as soon as practicable after the requisitioning of a special meeting of the conference, fix a date for the meeting, draw up the Agenda and, if appropriate, specify a date for the submission of amendments. The meeting shall

Standing Orders

deal only with the business stated in the notice of requisition save that the Committee may allow time for emergency motions and for business which is formal or, in its opinion, uncontentious.

5.2 Preferred timescales for special meetings

In setting dates for the submission of motions and amendments and giving notice thereof and of the conference itself the Committee shall endeavour to follow the timescales laid down elsewhere in these standing orders but, where this is not practicable, the Committee shall set such dates as it sees fit.

6. Appeals

6.1 Appeals against rejection of motions

The Committee shall provide written reasoning to the nominee of the proposers for the rejection of any motion or amendment. The proposers may appeal, in writing, to the next meeting of the Committee. Any such appeal shall provide reasons why, in the opinion of the proposers, the expressed reasons for rejection are not valid. If the appeal is allowed, the motion or amendment shall be treated as an emergency motion or amendment according to the stage of the agenda-setting process at which the appeal has been allowed.

6.2 Appeals against exclusion from conference

Any person excluded from conference by a decision of the Chief Steward shall have the right of appeal to the Committee at the next of its regular meetings. The exclusion shall remain in force pending the appeal.

7. The Chair

7.1 Who chairs conference

The President, if present, shall normally take the chair at the formal opening and closing of Conference and when the Party Leader is making a formal speech from the platform. At all other sessions the chair shall be appointed by the Committee. Normally no person shall chair more than one session at any meeting.

7.2 The Chair's aide

The Committee may appoint an aide or aides to assist the chair of each session.

Standing Orders

8. Conduct of Debate

8.1 Variation in the order of business

The Committee may propose to the conference a variation in the order of business as set out in the Agenda. Such variation shall be put to the vote and shall take effect if approved by a majority of those voting.

8.2 Withdrawal of motions and amendments

Once the Committee has included a motion or amendment, or part of a motion or amendment, in the Agenda, may not be withdrawn except by leave of conference. A request to withdraw a motion may be submitted to conference either by the movers of the motion or the Committee.

8.3 The order of debate

The Committee shall direct the order of debate. Generally, however, a motion will be moved and immediately thereafter the amendments and options will be moved in the order directed by the Committee. There will then be a general debate. The movers of amendments and options (or their nominees) shall have the right of reply in the same order (except that where an amendment or option has not been opposed during the debate, the chair of the session shall have the right to direct that its movers shall not exercise their right of reply), after which the mover of the motion (or the mover's nominee) shall have the right of reply. Votes shall then be taken on the amendments and options in the order in which they have been moved and, finally, on the substantive motion. The Committee may direct that part of any motion or amendment or groups or amendments may be the subject of a separate debate.

8.4 Topical issue discussions

The Committee shall direct the order of the discussion. Normally the proposer of the subject shall speak first, and a representative of the Federal Policy Committee shall speak last.

8.5 Who may speak

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

Standing Orders

8.6 The special rights of the Federal Committees

Provided that the Federal Policy Committee is not proposing the motion or any of the amendments to be taken in a debate on a policy motion or on motions relating to the policy-making processes of the Party it shall have the right to nominate a person to report its views on the subject before the conference. The Federal Board shall have similar rights on business motions or motions to amend the constitution, as shall the Federal Conference Committee on motions relating to the proceeding and procedures of the conference and to amend standing orders. Such a person shall be called to speak for the same length of time as the person replying on behalf of the mover of the motion.

8.7 The selection of speakers

Voting members wishing to speak in any debate shall submit a speaker's card, prior to the commencement of the debate in which they wish to speak, stating whether they wish to speak for or against an amendment, the motion or part of the motion. The chair shall be responsible for the choice of the speakers and shall attempt to provide a balanced debate between the different viewpoints in the conference, but may announce a departure from this rule if there is an overwhelming preponderance of members wishing to speak on the same side. The chair shall have the discretion to accept speakers' cards after the start of the debate. Save as provided for in these standing orders, no person may speak more than once in any debate.

8.8 The length of speeches

The Committee shall set out in the Agenda time limits for speeches.

9. Voting at Conference

9.1 The method of voting

Voting cards shall be issued at each meeting to voting members. (The Committee may direct that voting on any issue be by ballot.) Subject thereto all votes at full sessions shall be taken by show of voting cards and by voting members voting securely online

9.2 Counting of votes

A vote by show of voting cards shall be counted:

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- a) If the Committee has so directed.
- b) If the Chair so directs.
- c) As the result of a procedural motion under Standing Order 11.5 below.

A recount will only be held if the chair is not satisfied that the first count was accurate.

9.3 Separate votes

A separate vote may be taken on a part of a motion or amendment:

- a) On the direction of the Committee.
- b) At the discretion of the chair.
- c) As a result of a procedural motion under Standing Order 11.4 below.

10. Points of Order

10.1 Making a point of order

Any voting member may rise on a point of order which shall be taken immediately except that, during a vote, no point of order shall be taken that does not refer to the conduct of the vote. The chair's decision on all points of order shall be final.

11. Procedural Motions

11.1 Next business

- a) A voting member may, during any full conference session, submit, in writing, a request that conference move to next business, giving the reasons to do so. The submission shall not exceed 75 words.
- b) The chair may either take the request immediately upon receipt, or at the end of any speech currently being made. If more than one request is received the chair shall decide which to take. No more than one request may be taken in respect to any motion or report.
- c) When the request is to be taken, the chair shall read the statement of reasons and ask Conference whether it wishes to consider the request to move to next business. If Conference decides, by a simple majority of those voting, to do so, the person who made the request may speak. The Chair may allow other speakers. All speeches under this standing order shall be limited

Standing Orders

to two minutes. If Conference decides not to debate the proposal, it falls.

- d) The proposal shall require a two-thirds majority of those voting to be passed. If it is carried the current agenda item shall be abandoned without any further debate or vote and, at the discretion of the chair, either the next agenda item shall be taken or there shall be an adjournment until the time at which the next agenda item was due to be taken.

11.2 Reference back

- a) A request to refer back a motion under debate may be submitted by any of the bodies or groups listed in Standing Order 1.3(b) for business motions and 1.3(d) for policy motions. The deadline for submission of such a request shall be the same as that for amendments to motions. In exceptional circumstances, the chair of the debate shall have discretion to accept a request for a reference back if it is received in writing after this deadline.
- b) The submission shall state to whom the motion is to be referred and shall include a statement of the reasons, including reasons why voting against the motion would not achieve a similar result, not exceeding 150 words.
- c) If more than one request is received with respect to a motion, the Committee (or the chair of the debate in the case of requests received after the deadline) shall decide which to take. No more than one request may be taken with respect to any motion.
- d) When the request is to be taken, the Chair shall read the statement of reasons and ask Conference whether it wishes to consider the request to refer. If Conference decides, by a simple majority of those voting, to do so, the person who made the request may speak and the mover of the substantive motion, or their nominee, may reply. The Chair may allow other speakers. All speeches under this standing order shall be limited to three minutes. If Conference decides not to debate the reference back, it falls.
- e) The reference back shall require a simple majority of those voting to be passed. If it is carried the current

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agenda item shall be abandoned without any further debate or vote and, at the discretion of the chair, either the next agenda item shall be taken or there shall be an adjournment until the time at which the next agenda item was due to be taken.

- f) If the substantive motion is referred to the Federal Board, the Federal Policy Committee or the Federal Conference Committee that body shall, in its report to the next meeting of the conference, state what action it has taken on the reference.

11.3 Separate vote

A voting member of conference may request that the chair take a separate vote on a part of a motion or amendment provided that such a request is in writing and received by the commencement of the first conference session on the day before the debate is scheduled. If the debate is scheduled for the first day of conference, the request must be received in writing no later than 48 hours before the opening of conference. The Committee shall have complete discretion whether to take a separate vote. In exceptional circumstances, the Chair of the debate shall have discretion to accept a request for a separate vote if it is received in writing after this deadline.

11.4 Counted vote

Any voting member may ask for a counted vote, which shall be taken if the request is supported by 50 members rising in their places and showing their voting cards.

11.5 Suspension of standing orders

- a) A voting conference member may, during any full conference session, move a motion for the suspension of standing orders. Such a motion may contain no more than one proposed change to the agenda or conduct of debate. The mover shall submit the motion together with a written statement of its purpose, not exceeding 75 words, to the chair, who shall read them to the meeting. The chair may either take the request immediately upon receipt, or at the end of the speech currently being made.
- b) No motion to suspend standing orders may suspend any requirement of the constitution, nor any part of these standing orders which govern:

Standing Orders

- i) The rights of, or timetable for, submission of motions and amendments.
 - ii) Consultative sessions.
 - iii) Procedural motions for next business or suspension of standing orders.
- c) No motion to suspend standing orders to introduce a motion or amendment on to the agenda can be taken unless the motion or amendment has been submitted to the Committee in accordance with the published timetable and, where a right of appeal against non-selection exists, the right has been exercised.
- d) The chair shall read the statement of purpose and, if the suspension is allowable in the terms of this standing order, ask the conference whether it wishes to debate the request for suspension. If the conference decides not to debate the request, it falls. If the conference decides, by a majority of those present and voting, to hear the request the mover may speak and a representative of the Committee may reply. The chair shall have the discretion to allow other speakers. All speeches on the motion to suspend standing orders will be limited to two minutes.
- e) A motion to suspend standing orders shall only be carried if supported by at least two-thirds of the conference members voting. If the procedural motion is carried all standing orders shall remain in force except only for the purposes set out in the motion.

11.6 No procedural motions during votes

No procedural motion can be moved during a vote.

12. Reports

12.1 Which reports are tabled

The business session or sessions of the conference must include consideration of reports from the bodies listed in Standing Order 1.1(b).

12.2 Submission and selection of questions

A voting member may submit questions to any report tabled for consideration, by the deadlines set under Standing Orders 1.5(d) and (e). The Committee shall publish in advance of the report session all the questions submitted under Standing

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Order 1.5(d) which are in order, compositing similar questions where appropriate. Questions to the Federal Board report may include questions about the work of the Federal Audit and Scrutiny Committee and the work of the Federal People Development Committee

12.3 Whether questions are in order or not

A question shall be ruled out of order if it asks the body submitting the report about issues which are outside its duties and responsibilities. If the question could be answered by another body reporting to the same conference, the Committee may transfer the question to that body.

12.4 How questions and supplementary questions are put and answered

After the report is moved, the mover, or their nominee, shall answer the questions in turn. After each question has been answered, the voting member who submitted the question will be given the opportunity to put a supplementary question, speaking for a maximum of one minute, and the mover, or their nominee, will be given an opportunity to respond. The chair shall determine the time given to the mover in moving the report and replying to questions. The chair shall also determine how many of the published questions, and how many of the questions submitted under Standing Order 1.5 (e), can be taken. After the conference the Committee shall publish the answers to all questions submitted under Standing Orders 1.5(d) and (e) which are in order, and to all supplementary questions asked.

12.5 Approval, rejection or reference back of reports from Federal Party committees or sub-committees

- a) Any report tabled by a Federal Party committee or sub-committee must be submitted for approval by the conference and must be voted upon accordingly.
- b) A voting member may move the rejection of any part of the report or the report as a whole, by submitting a speaker's card prior to the commencement of the consideration of the report, stating the section(s) which they wish to have rejected. All moves to reject a report must be debated (except that the chair shall have discretion to choose between moves to reject the same part of the report), at the conclusion of the question session. The person who made the request shall speak

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and the mover of the report, or their nominee, shall reply. The chair may allow other speakers, and shall determine the time given to all speakers.

- c) A request to refer back any part of the report or the report as a whole may be submitted by any of the bodies or groups listed in Standing Order 1.3(b). The deadline for submission of such a request shall be the same as that for amendments to motions. In exceptional circumstances, the chair of the debate shall have discretion to accept a request for a reference back if it is received in writing after this deadline. A proposal to refer back shall include a written statement of the reasons, not exceeding 150 words, including reasons why rejecting the report would not achieve a similar result, together with any recommendations to the committee or sub-committee tabling the report. The Committee or, in the case of late submissions, the chair, shall decide how many references back to take if more than one is submitted. The representative of the body or group that submitted the request shall speak and the mover of the report, or their nominee, shall reply. The chair may allow other speakers, and shall determine the time given to all speakers.

12.6 Receipt of reports from other bodies

- a) Any report tabled by a body other than a Federal Party committee or sub-committee must be submitted for receipt by the conference and must be voted upon accordingly.
- b) A voting member may move not to receive any part of the report or the report as a whole, by submitting a speaker's card prior to the commencement of the consideration of the report, stating the section(s) which they wish not to receive. All moves not to receive a report must be debated (except that the chair shall have discretion to choose between moves not to receive the same part of the report), at the conclusion of the question session. The person who made the request shall speak and the mover of the report, or their nominee, shall reply. The chair may allow other speakers, and shall determine the time given to all speakers.

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- c) A request to refer back any part of the report or the report as a whole may be submitted by any of the bodies or groups listed in Standing Order 1.3(b). The deadline for submission of such a request shall be the same as that for amendments to motions. In exceptional circumstances, the chair of the debate shall have discretion to accept a request for a reference back if it is received in writing after this deadline. A proposal to refer back shall include a written statement of the reasons, not exceeding 150 words, including reasons why not receiving the report would not achieve a similar result, together with any recommendations to the body tabling the report. The Committee or, in the case of late submissions, the chair, shall decide how many references back to take if more than one is submitted. The representative of the body or group that submitted the request shall speak and the mover of the report, or their nominee, shall reply. The chair may allow other speakers, and shall determine the time given to all speakers.

13. Amendment of Standing Orders

13.1 Amendment of standing orders

These standing orders may be amended by a two-thirds majority of members of conference voting on a motion duly submitted and selected in accordance with standing orders. Subject to any amendment they shall remain in force from meeting to meeting.

14. The Chair and Vice Chairs of the Committee

14.1 Chair and Vice Chairs

At its first meeting after a new election the Committee shall elect a Chair, who must be a member of the Committee directly elected by party members, and at least one Vice Chair, who must be members of the Committee either directly elected by party members or elected by one of the State Parties.