Liberal Democrats

Autumn Conference
BRIGHTON 2026

Agenda

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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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Liberal Democrats

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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.

Liberal Democrats

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

Liberal Democrats

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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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**

Josh Babarinde MP & Cllr Jay Mercer

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

Conference notes that:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Conference reaffirms the Liberal Democrat commitment to:

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

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

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

Conference therefore calls on the Government to:

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

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

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

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

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Democrat target for building 150,000 social homes per year and by giving councils the power to end right-to-buy in their area.

5. Establish minimum standards for outdoor space and natural light for all new homes, including those created through permitted development orders, and take powers to require existing conversions to be remediated.

6. Require routine inspections of properties used as temporary accommodation, and provide cots or Moses baskets to all children under the age of two in temporary accommodation and to ensure no child is raised in accommodation without cooking facilities.

7. End the mixing of single adults and families in accommodation with shared bathroom and/or kitchen 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

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Conference notes:

A. Research from the Education Policy Institute which found that a falling birthrate has created a drop in pupil demand that exposes up to 800 primary schools across England to potential closure by 2029.

B. 68 per cent of teacher trainees in more rural areas like Cornwall require family support during their traineeship, and 78 per cent of trainees require a car to get to placements.

C. Since the academic year 2014/15, teachers in small rural schools have left the profession or moved to schools in other areas at a higher rate than those in urban areas.

D. That the Government's removal of the Rural Services Delivery Grant has made it harder for local authorities to deliver rural services, including education.

E. Children in rural areas enjoy fewer enrichment activities, educational visits and work experience opportunities.

F. That the Labour Government's rollout of the 'Coastal Challenge' is deeply limited in scope and, unlike the historic London Challenge upon which it is inspired, is entirely unsupported by dedicated funding.

G. Government data collection on coastal and rural schools remains inadequate to understanding the unique challenges of delivering a rural education.

Conference believes that:

i) Every child, regardless of their postcode, deserves access to a world-class education and a thriving local school.

ii) Coastal and rural schools are the heartbeat of their communities, and supporting them is essential to ensuring the vibrant social fabric of smaller towns and villages.

iii) Existing funding mechanisms fail to recognise the realities of coastal and rural geographies, unfairly penalising small schools for unavoidable and structurally higher per-pupil

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delivery costs.

iv) Resolving the teacher retention crisis in isolated regions requires building sustainable local career pathways for local people and existing school support staff, rather than solely depending on graduate relocation schemes.

Conference reaffirms Liberal Democrat pledges to:

A. Commit to conducting trials of mobile youth work teams, which either use existing local hubs or mobile facilities, as decided by the relevant local authority.

B. Increase school and college funding per pupil above the rate of inflation every year.

Conference calls on the Government to invest in coastal and rural schools by:

1. Conducting an immediate review of the Dedicated Schools Grant to ensure that the national funding formula fully reflects the higher per-pupil costs of educating pupils in coastal and rural areas.

2. Ensuring that any review recognises sparsity and rurality as distinct funding variables, and allows for local adjustments within local authorities where data is reliable and rollout is feasible.

3. Improving data coordination and collection between the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affair and the Department for Education (DfE) on rural and coastal schools so that definitions of rural and urban are reflected in DfE data.

4. Enabling school leaders to plan ahead by ensuring they are sighted on DfE's funding strategy beyond annual funding settlements.

5. Piloting local 'Grow Your Own' talent pipelines through a teacher apprenticeship scheme specifically targeted at rural and coastal areas, and providing a dedicated, funded pathway for local teaching assistants and support staff to transition into fully qualified teachers.

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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

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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)

Conference believes that:

A. Business is Britain's engine of national prosperity: it creates good jobs, fosters thriving local areas, drives innovation and helps fund public services.

B. Business is also the vehicle enabling millions of people to create something new, make the most of their own skills and talents and build a new community.

C. The Liberal Democrats are the natural party of business, as the only truly internationalist, pro-enterprise and fiscally responsible political force, advocating for a mutually beneficial partnership between the public and private sector.

D. Liberals have always championed free trade, fair markets and dynamic enterprise, while enabling people to have a meaningful stake in the rewards of economic growth.

Conference notes that:

i) Britain's businesses have been failed by Labour's two anti-

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growth budgets and years of Conservative Party mismanagement, culminating in the mini-Budget of 2022.

ii) The Labour Government has saddled businesses, especially high street SMEs, with an unfair jobs tax and damaging business rates hikes.

iii) Business is now threatened by Nigel Farage, who masterminded the shambolic Brexit deal and is more interested in cheering on Donald Trump's chaotic tariff wars and promoting the interests of his bitcoin billionaire backers than backing British families and firms.

iv) Barriers to accessing finance are forcing start-ups and scale-ups to go overseas to raise capital.

v) The UK's tax system was not built for a modern economy of software, intellectual property and intangible assets, and it holds back innovation and companies with potential for high growth.

vi) Tax compliance costs small businesses an estimated £25 billion a year, with the average firm losing 44 hours and £4,500 to form-filling.

vii) Youth unemployment is undermining a whole generation, while sectors that provide many people's first jobs, such as hospitality, are under mounting pressure.

viii) Labour's Employment Rights Act failed to strike the right balance, putting disproportionate burdens on businesses while introducing only limited improvements for workers.

ix) Liberal Democrats secured a six-month qualifying period for protection from unfair dismissal in the Employment Rights Act, a fair and balanced result for businesses and workers.

Conference reaffirms Liberal Democrat commitments to:

a) Build an economy that works for everyone, fostering diverse business ownership models – including mutuals, social enterprises and community interest companies.

b) Tackle the productivity crisis by encouraging businesses to

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

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

Conference further calls on the Government to:

1. Create a 'one-stop-shop' for businesses with government, by splitting the Treasury into a new Department for Growth and a Department for Public Expenditure; merging the current Department for Business and Trade into the new Department for Growth; and ensuring that businesses each have a single account manager, and that policies affecting business are aligned across departments.

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

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

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

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

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

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systems in which claims are assessed upfront by scientists and engineers, not tax compliance teams.

7. Commit to championing competition and regulatory changes to tackle high energy prices affecting small businesses, including making energy contracts more transparent and expanding access to the Energy Ombudsman for all SMEs.

8. Give workers a stronger voice in designing companies' AI-adoption policies, and in making the most of AI job augmentation, by championing employee representation on company boards for large and UK-listed companies.

9. Recognise the unique contribution of family businesses to long-term growth, noting their focus on long-term stewardship and community engagement, and ensure banks understand family governance models, so they can 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 Al Pinkerton MP (Spokesperson for Europe)

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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

Conference notes that:

i) Maternal deaths in the UK are higher than at any point in the last decade.

ii) 65 per cent of maternity units are not safe to give birth in, according to the Care Quality Commission, and the Commission has stated that they are "concerned about the potential normalising of serious harm in maternity".

iii) Shortages of experienced staff, including specialist doctors and senior midwives, especially at night, has been repeatedly identified as a source of failure in maternity, including in landmark maternity investigations such as the Ockenden report into failings at Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital Trust.

iv) Maternity represents the largest share of clinical negligence payments, at £1.3 billion a year.

v) Reviews into maternity have come up with more than 700 recommendations in the past decade, but improvements have been limited.

vi) There have been repeated investigations into maternity services in recent years, often uncovering similar failings, including most recently the Nottingham, Leeds and Sussex investigations and the national Amos Review.

Conference believes that:

A. Britain should be the safest country in the world in which to have a baby.

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B. Every maternity unit should meet 'good' or 'outstanding' standards of safety.

C. No woman should face injury or trauma due to unsafe healthcare.

D. There should be sufficient staff to ensure mothers benefit from the greatest possible safety and choice during pregnancy and labour.

Conference calls for:

I. Every maternity unit to be brought up to good levels of safety through:

a) Consultant obstetricians to be present on every labour ward 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

b) One-to-one midwifery care for every woman in labour.

II. A capital investment programme that:

a) Brings every maternity and neonatal unit up to good condition; this should include renovation of the 42 per cent of units in need of major repair and immediately starting repairs in the 7 per cent of units that run a risk of imminent breakdown.

b) Delivers new dedicated bereavement suites.

c) Invests in high-quality equipment that reduces the rate of injury, including identifying and developing new tools such as air cuff alternatives to forceps.

Conference additionally calls for:

1. A national Maternity Commissioner to oversee improved standards of care.

2. Mandatory, regularly updated, salaried training each year that:

a) Includes foetal monitoring and emergency procedures for all maternity staff.

b) Includes 52 hours' salaried training time for midwives, as recommended by the Royal College of Midwives.

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c) Clearly communicates a shared understanding of safety, with focused training for those in leadership roles in building a culture of openness and speaking up.

3. A Director of Midwifery to be appointed in every maternity service, alongside an extra 300 consultant midwives across the country to help drive clinical excellence.

4. A restoration of Service Development Funding (£95 million), which the Labour Government cut, to support enhanced care for complex pregnancies, multiple births or bereavement care and support.

5. Guaranteed bereavement specialists and perinatal mental health specialists in every maternity service.

6. A dedicated neonatal workforce plan which ensures that neonatal teams are properly staffed in every hospital, including the right mix of specialists.

7. Better support during pregnancy including:

   a) Guaranteed access to preconception services and timely antenatal booking.

   b) Clear referral pathways to support personalised care by multidisciplinary teams from the earliest opportunity to support mothers' safety and preferences.

8. Review national standards and funding to ensure every mother has access to high-quality antenatal classes, regardless of postcode.

9. Disparities in maternity care, which particularly impacts black and Asian women, disabled women and women from deprived backgrounds, to be tackled, including through:

   a) Mandatory training on inequalities, including identifying specific risks, such as recognising jaundice or cyanosis in babies with darker skin tones.

   b) A cross-government target and strategy for eliminating

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maternal health disparities, backed by new investment in public health.

10. A systematic review of complaints processes in maternity and neonatal care to deliver new national standards, including on communication with patients, transparency and ease of registering a complaint.

11. Transparent national monitoring, with clear national benchmarks for success, for the hundreds of recommendations of the major reviews into maternity services in the UK.

12. All miscarriages to be recorded so that the issue is no longer hidden, national targets can be set, and the impact of interventions can be measured.

13. Support and referral including to NHS mental health support services to be made available after every 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.

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.

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)

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.

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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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Conference therefore endorses policy paper 164, *Strength, Resilience and Partnership: Securing Britain and Defending Liberalism in Turbulent Times*, and in particular its policies to:

1. Strengthen UK defences by:

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a) Maintaining and deepening British support to Ukraine, including through continued financial, diplomatic and military support.

b) Ensuring that the armed forces, to whom the Liberal Democrats remain hugely grateful for their dedication and sacrifice, are properly equipped and trained to deal with the challenges of a rapidly evolving defence and security environment, particularly those related to game-changing technological advances.

c) Meeting the NATO spending target of 3.5 per cent of GDP on core defence requirements and a further 1.5 per cent on 'defence and security-related spending' by 2035, and reaching 3 per cent by 2030, recognising that this will require difficult fiscal choices.

d) Kickstarting investment in the regeneration of the armed forces by raising £20 billion through the sale of defence bonds.

e) Ensuring that additional resources for defence are not wasted by increasing transparency, scrutiny and accountability of the Ministry of Defence, including through new bodies such as a dedicated House of Commons Defence Public Accounts Committee.

f) Conducting a full assessment of the degree to which UK military capabilities need in the medium-to-long term to be fully sovereign, developed and operated with allies or acquired internationally 'off-the-shelf'.

2. Work more closely with the UK's European allies towards these aims by:

a) Seeking to join the European Single Market, which would provide enhanced access to, and greater influence over, EU defence capability funding and development programmes.

b) Supporting pooling, sharing and specialisation initiatives for military capabilities where appropriate to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of European defence spending.

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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.

d) Seeking UK involvement in EU military and civilian missions and deepening long-term EU–UK cooperation via diplomatic and military exchange programmes.

3. Build national resilience by:

a) Establishing a new Civil Defence Office to coordinate and strengthen whole-of-society resilience.

b) Creating a new Civil Volunteer Reserve to ensure that necessary skills can be made available to a national effort at short notice.

c) Building whole-of-society resilience with a national conversation to raise public awareness of what is at stake.

d) Ensuring that the UK meets its resilience commitments to NATO under Article 3 of the North Atlantic Treaty.

4. Defend the principle and practice of multilateralism by:

a) Defending global institutions and norms which are critical to Britain's national security and prosperity.

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.

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.

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118 d) Pushing polar and maritime security issues higher up
119 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.

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.

16.00 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

1 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

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and life chances.

II. Health visitors provide a universal frontline public health service for babies, young children and families, playing a vital role in:

a) Safeguarding children and preventing childhood accidents and unintentional injuries.

b) Preventing unnecessary visits to Accident & Emergency (with babies under 12 months having the highest rate of A&E attendance).

c) Supporting infant feeding.

d) Identifying and supporting infant and early child mental health issues.

e) Identifying developmental delay.

f) Reducing health inequalities.

g) Relieving pressure on GPs, hospitals and social care.

III. The Institute of Health Visiting's 2024 UK Survey Report, *From Disparity to Opportunity: The case for rebuilding health visiting*, found:

a) Rising levels of poverty, perinatal mental illness and complex family needs.

b) Major regional inequalities in access to support.

c) Severe workforce shortages.

d) Unsafe caseloads in many areas.

e) Growing concern among practitioners about safeguarding risks.

IV. The number of health visitors in England has fallen dramatically since 2015, despite increasing demand for support

V. There is a significant disparity in health visiting provision between England and the other nations of the UK.

VI. Government has prioritised childcare subsidies for

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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.

9. The collection and publication of robust national data on health visitor numbers, caseloads, outcomes and service access.

10. Recognition of health visiting as a key part of the Liberal Democrat commitment to shift healthcare towards prevention, community services and early intervention.

Conference further calls on Liberal Democrat parliamentarians to campaign for:

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

Conference notes that:

i) Private law proceedings, which are between parents or family members about child arrangements, were reviewed by the 2020 Harm Panel, but many of its 72 recommendations remain unimplemented.

ii) The Family Court Reporting and Reform Mechanism (FCRRM) pilot, in 2024, found that the structural problems identified by the Harm Panel – pro-contact culture, adversarialism, lack of resources, and siloed working – remain widespread.

iii) FCRRM data also indicated that domestic abuse is present in 73 per cent of hearings and identified in 87 per cent of case file reviews.

iv) Family courts permit evidence from unregulated therapists, raising concerns particularly in cases involving allegations of parental alienation.

v) The 'Pathfinder' model, now operating in over 20 English courts and all Welsh family courts, has been described by the President of the Family Division as "more radical, and

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far more successful, than even its most ardent supporters would have anticipated".

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

Conference further notes that:

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

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

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

Conference believes that:

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

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

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

Conference calls on the Government to:

1. Improve private law proceedings by:

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

    b) Commissioning an independent review of the implementation of the Harm Panel's 72 recommendations.

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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)

Conference notes:

A. The murders of Jo Cox MP and Sir David Amess MP, and the manslaughter of Cllr Andrew Pennington and attempted murder of Nigel Jones MP.

B. That research shows a growing level of abuse and threats of violence towards both candidates in elections and elected officials at all levels.

C. A Local Government Association survey of councillors carried out last year as part of its 'Debate not Hate' campaign found that:

i) 52 per cent of councillors replying reported that they have had untrue or misleading information about their political or personal conduct publicly published, with respondents warning of the "dangers to democracy".

ii) 64 per cent said they had experienced abuse online, including on social media platforms, while 59 per cent

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said they had experienced in-person abuse.

D. That women, people from ethnic minority backgrounds, disabled people, and LGBTQ+ people are subject to disproportionately high levels of abuse, intimidation and threats.

E. That a 2026 *Local Government Chronicle* survey reported that 52 per cent of respondents said concern about online abuse affected decisions to whether to stand or re-stand.

F. That *The Guardian* reported on 7 May 2026 that parties had described abuse during the 2026 devolved and local election campaigns as the "worst year in memory".

G. The role of social media in enabling abuse, threats, harassment and misinformation to be directed at candidates and elected officials easily, repeatedly and at scale.

H. That in the 2025 LGA Debate Not Hate survey, one fifth of councillors replying said that they have had a threat of violence or death against themselves, this rose to one quarter if you included threats against someone close to them

Conference further notes:

I. The creation of Operation Bridger and Operation Ford to deal with violence and threats against, respectively, MPs and parliamentary candidates, and councillors and local candidates.

II. The effectiveness and responsiveness of police forces to threats and abuse under Operation Ford is highly variable from force to force.

III. Abuse and threats are not limited to elected representatives and candidates but can be directed towards, or involve, spouses, partners and children and staff.

IV. That Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights protects an individual's rights to hold and express

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opinions.

Conference believes that:

a) Abuse, threats and violence have a chilling impact on democracy – they stifle debate, discourage individual involvement in civic life and discourage people, in particular those most likely to face abuse, from standing or re-standing for elected office and leadership positions.

b) Freedom of expression and debate is an essential part of a liberal society and there will always be the need to balance protecting elected officials and protecting everyone's right to freedom of speech.

c) There is a difference between robust debate and criticism, and even rudeness, on the one hand and threats, violence and repetitive abuse on the other.

d) Directing abuse at, or involving, the families and children of elected officials is always wrong;

e) The publication of elected officials' and candidates' home addresses is not necessary within a modern democratic society when there are multiple routes to communicate with elected representatives.

f) Social media companies have a duty to deal with illegal and threatening behaviour on their sites, which is not being fully met.

Conference resolves that:

1. The law should be amended so that no candidate is required, or given a default option, to publish their home address as part of the nomination process for any election, and so that home address forms are available only to those with a clear and legitimate statutory reason to view them.

2. Election agents should be able to use a party office, or other approved election correspondence address, as their legal office address where publication of their home address would create a personal safety or privacy risk.

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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

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provide grants, funded by the Home Office, for home security, CCTV and personal panic alarms.

11. Social media firms operating in the UK should have a statutory responsibility to tackle abuse against elected officials and be required to provide a support line, staffed by humans, for political parties' HQs and UK -wide support service to report the most serious cases of online abuse 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

Conference notes that:

a) The UK music industry remains one of the nation's most significant economic pillars, contributing £8 billion to the UK economy in gross value added, and employing more than 220,000 people in 2024.

b) The Government has undermined trust with the creative industries by stating a preferred 'opt-out' approach to AI content use, before dropping this position following sectoral pressure.

c) Artists are particularly concerned about the impact of AI on the industry, with 90 per cent in favour of protections to stop their work being used without permission or payment.

d) The voluntary uptake of the Grassroots Ticket Levy remains underwhelming, with only 28 per cent of large venues implementing the levy, with progress reportedly hampered by large ticket distribution organisations.

e) Europe-wide touring for British musicians has been severely disadvantaged by bureaucratic post-Brexit barriers, including costly visas, carnets and permits, and the Government has failed to achieve tangible progress for musicians as part of the UK–EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement.

f) While the Government's curriculum review response has committed to ensuring children have access to a well-

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rounded creative education, funding for Music Hubs remains 19 per cent below 2011 levels in real terms.

Conference believes that:

I. The cultural and creative industries are a primary engine of long-term economic growth, local community rejuvenation and international soft power for the United Kingdom.

II. Human creativity must be protected, valued and fairly remunerated, and that technological innovation can and should support the artistic community.

III. The scraping of British creative content by foreign AI companies is fundamentally a question of sovereignty and trust.

IV. Grassroots music venues, which form the lifeblood of the UK's world-leading music ecosystem, are closing at an alarming rate due to rising development pressures and a lack of systemic financial support.

V. Every child, regardless of background or educational needs, has a fundamental right to a rich, high-quality creative education, including music.

Conference reaffirms Liberal Democrat pledges to:

A. Reverse real-terms cuts to Music Hubs since 2011, with a 19 per cent increase in funding followed by a commitment to annual increases in line with inflation.

B. Impose a statutory large venue levy to fund grassroots venues, alongside a VAT cut for grassroots music venues.

C. Fully enforce the 'Agent of Change' principle by blocking developments nearby existing music venues that lack strict soundproofing, and applying it to all noise complaints against existing venues.

Conference calls on the Government to invest in music education by:

i) Reinstating Music PGCE bursaries to attract talented

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

d) Introducing image, voice and personality rights, protecting musicians and performers from unauthorised deepfakes and synthetic reproductions of their likeness, voice or 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

Conference notes:

i) That enabling more people to walk, wheel and cycle short journeys eases congestion, improves local air quality and helps tackle the public health crisis driven by physical inactivity.

ii) Research by Active Travel England indicating that 5.3 million more people being regularly physically active could reduce annual sick days by 4.4 million, free up 1.7 million GP appointments, help millions of households save around £1,700 yearly, prevent 2,500 premature deaths and boost the economy by £115 billion.

iii) That active travel improves public health by integrating exercise into everyday routines, preventing serious conditions like heart disease, type 2 diabetes, and obesity.

iv) That active travel lowers stress, boosts mental well-being, reduces road congestion, and cuts emissions to clean up local air quality.

v) That the 2025 Walking and Cycling Index, produced by the Walk Wheel Cycle Trust, estimates that everyday active travel prevents almost 156,000 serious long-term health conditions across the UK each year – from hip fractures to dementia and depression – saving the NHS around £1.94 billion annually.

vi) That transport remains one of the largest sources of UK greenhouse gas emissions, and giving people easy, low-carbon options for local journeys is essential to meeting the UK's climate commitments.

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

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

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

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

Conference believes that:

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

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

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

Conference calls for:

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

2. A national 'Rails to Trails' programme to convert disused railway corridors, towpaths and redundant infrastructure into high-quality, interconnected routes for walking, 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)

Conference believes that democracy in Britain is under threat from:

i) Foreign states and billionaires who seek to use money and media interference to unduly influence British politicians and British elections.

ii) The rapid rise of new technologies which makes it easier for misinformation from malign actors to spread fear and confusion, stirring up racial hatred and moral panic, and which amplifies grievance narratives that leave people vulnerable to radicalisation.

iii) An historic low in public trust in British politics, compounded by a First-Past-the-Post voting system for general elections and the further centralisation of power in Westminster.

Conference notes that these threats are evident in the results of the latest British Social Attitudes Survey (February 2026) and in the independent findings of the recent Rycroft Review.

Conference reaffirms the Liberal Democrat commitment to:

A. Introduce proportional representation by the Single Transferable Vote for electing Westminster MPs and local councillors in England.

B. Expand the franchise to 16- and 17-year olds.

C. Introduce measures such as automatic voter registration and removal of the need for ID that make it easier for people to vote.

D. Reform the House of Lords with a proper democratic mandate.

E. Introduce a codified constitution.

F. Strengthen local government.

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G. A Federal Britain.

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

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

1. Tackle undue influence by foreign states by:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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consider its approach to corporate donations.

c) Introducing national spending limits for the regulated period of local elections, to close a potential loophole.

d) Working towards radical real-time transparency for political advertising, donations and spending, including an easily searchable public database of all online political adverts.

3. Strengthening the enforcement of electoral law, including by:

a) Protecting and strengthening the independence of the Electoral Commission, following Conservative attempts to undermine it.

b) Setting up a dedicated national policing unit within the National Crime Agency, specifically dedicated to tackling corruption and criminal behaviour within Westminster and Whitehall, including criminal breaches of electoral law.

c) Ensuring that the sentencing associated with each criminal offence in electoral law matches the seriousness of the offence.

4. Urgently convene a Constitutional Convention to enshrine fundamental shared British values, rights and freedoms in a new codified constitution; this will act as the first line of defence against the multiple threats Britain faces to its democracy.

5. Promoting a vigorous local democratic culture as the bedrock for a healthy democracy by:

a) Ending the top-down reorganisation of councils and the imposition of elected mayors on communities which do not want them.

b) Devolving more fiscal and economic power to local authorities.

c) Supporting the presence of community, town and parish councils.

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6. Strengthening resilience to the spread of misinformation and hatred in all forms of media by:

    a) Commissioning a second Leveson-type review of media regulation, covering new media in addition to traditional broadcast and print media, recognising that the media scene has evolved significantly since the original Leveson Inquiry reported in 2012.

    b) Introducing lifelong learning for all citizens about the digital public sphere and how to navigate it.

    c) Funding local journalism and independent fact-checkers with a share of a levy on very large social media platforms; and making it easier for these organisations to gain charitable status.

7. Promoting informed citizenship and countering radicalisation by:

    a) Strengthening citizenship education in primary and secondary schools, with a greater focus on political and media literacy; and elevating the academic status of the Citizenship GCSE.

    b) Increasing the public funding available to civil society organisations which can play a role in citizenship education, including political media literacy; this should include the creation of a long-term, ringfenced Community Democratic Resilience Fund to support youth services, training for educators and parents and local democratic participation initiatives.

    c) Conducting a full overhaul of Prevent, including the delivery of a new counter-radicalisation programme – a community-led engagement strategy focused on minimising exposure to pathways towards violent extremism and to meet the challenges of today's threats.

    d) Ensuring that counter-radicalisation approaches also uphold protections for academic freedom, journalistic activity and legitimate political dissent, including upholding the right to protest.

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

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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.

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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

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

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

Conference acknowledges that:

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

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

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

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

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

Conference notes that:

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

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

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Conference further notes the following findings from the party strategy consultation:

i) Members overwhelmingly anchor the party's purpose in championing Liberal values and individual freedom, fairness, equality and social justice, and representing, serving and listening to communities across the UK.

ii) Members define success primarily in terms of electoral growth and more seats, delivering real policy and societal outcomes, and achieving genuine power and influence in government at all levels, with that growth built from a stable base, particularly in local government.

iii) Members identify the party's greatest opportunities for a competitive advantage as developing a clear national narrative and distinctive messaging; demonstrating honesty, integrity and competence; and being a credible, Liberal alternative to populism and nationalism.

iv) Members believe that the party's greatest need is to communicate a clear identity through distinctive messaging, especially given the fast rise of Reform and the Green Party, and the resilience of Labour, the Conservatives, the SNP and Plaid Cymru.

v) Members believe that the party's electoral appeal should be firmly grounded in Liberalism; the problem is not our values, but our failure to communicate them clearly, practically and emotionally; well-communicated Liberalism is the strongest electoral offer available to us and to the country.

vi) Members believe that how we engage with other parties must start from our Liberal distinctiveness, be judged issue by issue, and proceed only from a position of strength, with clearly defined limits and full transparency with members, volunteers, elected representatives and peers; preserving our identity is non-negotiable – members overwhelmingly reject pre-election pacts, and believe that post-election local arrangements should remain a matter for local stakeholders, reflecting a core tenet of Liberalism.

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

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

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

1. Our aims are to:

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

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

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

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

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Liberal Democrats are a party of government; this includes stopping Reform UK and the far right from being in power at any level, while building a positive Liberal alternative to the politics of nationalism, authoritarianism, grievance and division.

e) Expand our electoral coalition beyond our current base at any given layer of government, with a particular focus on wards, divisions, constituencies and electoral regions in the North, Midlands, Wales and urban Britain.

f) Deliver a strategy rooted in our core Liberal values, including individual freedom, fairness, opportunity, equality, internationalism, democratic reform and care for the environment.

g) Build a modern party that reflects the diversity of the society that we are ambitious to represent, with particular focus on reaching communities currently under-represented among our members, volunteers, elected representatives and peers.

h) Grow our membership, activist and candidate base, especially among younger people and under-represented communities, so that the party has the people, skills and energy needed to campaign, win and govern in every part of Britain.

2. We will achieve these aims most effectively by:

a) Developing a compelling, clear and distinctive national narrative, grounded in Liberal values, that has emotional as well as rational appeal, and that clearly and visibly differentiates the Liberal Democrats from other parties, particularly those with populist and nationalist tendencies.

b) Resisting the politics of nationalism, authoritarianism, division and grievance, wherever they arise, and offering instead Liberal politics rooted in freedom, fairness, internationalism, hope and respect for every individual.

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c) Maintaining a strong tradition of community politics and a ground game of relentless door-knocking and literature distribution, while recognising that building stronger national messaging alongside a professional social media and digital operation is no longer optional but essential to reaching new communities of voters.

d) Consolidating places where we are stronger, so that we can enhance our electoral sustainability, and so that volunteers from those 'fortresses' are more sustainably able to offer support to developing seats.

e) Working with Liberals across Europe and the world to defend pluralism, the rule of law, and the open, internationalist values on which Europe's future prosperity and security depend.

3. Our top priorities to help us fight and win elections – and win office – will be:

a) Building a clear, simple and emotionally resonant national identity for the party, ensuring that voters and internal Liberal Democrat stakeholders feel confident answering the question of what the Liberal Democrats stand for, and that our message is consistent, repeatable and distinctive.

b) Investing significantly in digital and social media capability, treating it as a strategic priority equivalent to our ground game, through:

i) Building a significantly larger and more effective social media team at Liberal Democrat HQ.

ii) Developing high-quality video content and a presence on platforms that better enable us to reach younger voters, transient populations and those who can be difficult to access through our traditional ground game.

iii) Training and supporting local volunteers and candidates to use digital tools effectively, extending 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.

e) Completing implementation of the diversity recommendations from the Thornhill and Alderdice Reviews, particularly those relating to racial equality and diversity.

f) Investing in socio-economic diversity, so that working-class Liberal Democrat talent can thrive at every level of the party.

g) Striving for gender parity among Liberal Democrats at every level of government.

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.

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.

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.

Conference resolves that to support the delivery of these priorities, we will also:

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:

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i) Recognising that the experience of members, volunteers and volunteers differs greatly depending on where they live, the strength and capacity of their local party, and the support available from regional, state and federal party bodies, and ensuring that parties receive the differing levels of support they need to improve that experience.

ii) Providing opportunities for members to develop and promote Liberal political priorities locally and nationally.

iii) Supporting members to stand for election to public bodies.

iv) Providing high-quality training, mentoring and development opportunities to help members, volunteers and candidates build the skills needed to support the party's objectives.

v) Supporting members to work with others who share their interests, including through party bodies, Affiliated Organisations and other groupings.

vi) Reducing barriers to participation within the party, including participating in roles within the party, policy-making and Federal Conference.

vii) Modernising the member experience, so that all are welcomed, valued, retained and offered meaningful opportunities to contribute beyond election periods.

viii) Ensuring the complaints system is fair, proportionate, timely and confidential where appropriate, while maintaining the integrity and independence of individual processes.

B. Ensure that this strategy is implemented effectively by:

i) Engaging members, volunteers, elected representatives, peers, donors and staff as partners in delivering this strategy, communicating trade-offs honestly and ensuring that ownership is shared at every level of the party.

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ii) Embedding the strategy across the party, through state, regional and local structures, and with parliamentarians, candidates and councillors, and using internal communications.

iii) Reporting back to Federal Conference on progress against this strategy, including delivery against agreed measurable milestones, key areas of progress, areas where further action is required and any proposed changes to the strategy.

iv) Further developing our 'one party' approach and culture, so that every part of the Liberal Democrat family, including members, volunteers, candidates, councillors, parliamentarians, directly elected mayors, staff, state parties, regional parties, local parties, Affiliated Organisations and donors, works together to achieve our shared objectives.

v) Continuing to make progress on measuring, reducing and offsetting carbon emissions that arise from party operations, towards the aim of eventually operating at net zero emissions, and embedding sustainability in 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

Conference notes with concern that:

A. Over 1 million young people aged 16–24 are not in education, employment or training.

B. The Milburn Review found that "entry-level roles have become less plentiful and more demanding. Recruitment has become more remote, more automated and less human".

C. Research conducted by University College London showed that disadvantaged and ethnic minority graduates have lower job offer rates, with huge disparities at both the initial application stage and online test stage.

D. The Information Commissioner's Office has found that employers were using "solely automated systems without meaningful human involvement" when making hiring decisions and concluded that there is a need for greater transparency and improved safeguards.

Conference believes that:

i) Fair hiring practices are essential for ensuring equality of opportunity.

ii) Job applicants deserve honesty and openness regarding both the roles that they apply for and the hiring process used, including any automation used.

iii) The use of automation does not remove human 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

Conference notes that:

I. A SLAPP – or Strategic Lawsuit Against Public Participation – is an abusive legal threat aimed at stifling public participation and protected speech.

II. In the Foreign Policy Centre's 2020 survey the UK was by far the most frequent country of origin for legal threats received by journalists investigating financial crime and corruption.

III. The Economic Crime and Corporate Transparency Act 2023 introduced anti-SLAPP protections for reporting on economic crime.

IV. In April 2024, the Council of Europe Committee of Ministers approved Recommendation CM/Rec(2024)2, which establishes a set of minimum standards for Council of Europe member states, of which the UK is one, to tackle SLAPPs.

V. In May 2024, the Solicitors Regulation Authority (SRA)

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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.

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.

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.

VIII. The Labour Government has repeatedly committed to introducing anti-SLAPP legislation, but has so far failed to do so.

Conference believes that:

A. Equal access to justice for all is a fundamental right in any democratic society.

B. Nobody should be able to use vast sums of money to silence legitimate scrutiny or public interest reporting.

C. The current anti-SLAPP regime is too narrow and does not provide proper protection across all areas of public interest.

D. The Labour Government is failing to act with any urgency, despite the threat SLAPPs pose to a healthy democracy.

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.

F. Effective anti-SLAPP legislation must distinguish between abusive litigation and legitimate claims in defamation, privacy and other areas of law.

Conference calls on the Government to:

1. Introduce comprehensive anti-SLAPP legislation covering

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all matters of public interest which would:

a) Introduce a filter mechanism that empowers courts to swiftly dispose of SLAPPs.

b) Extend early dismissal procedures and costs protection for defendants to all SLAPP cases, not just those involving economic crime.

c) Empower courts to impose financial penalties on those who bring abusive SLAPP claims to deter future use and provide full compensation to those targeted.

2. Strengthen the regulatory powers of professional standards bodies and ensure robust enforcement against lawyers and law firms that engage in abusive SLAPP litigation.

3. Improve access to legal advice and support for journalists, whistleblowers, campaigners and others facing SLAPP 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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Conference recognises that NHS primary healthcare services play a frontline role in treating patients and that their visible shortcomings are both a representation of the failings that exist throughout the entire system and a problem in and of themselves.

Conference notes that:

I. Primary care is where most patients first seek help and where early treatment prevents illness from escalating into a problem that adds to demands on hospitals.

II. General practices, dentists and pharmacies are the front door to the rest of the NHS and they collectively deliver 90 per cent of the interactions between the NHS and the public.

III. Health has been the second most important issue to voters over the past 15 years, behind only the economy.

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

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

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

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spending going to primary care shrank even as demand rose.

Conference believes that a Liberal NHS primary care system should:

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

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

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

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

Conference notes with concern that:

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

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

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

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

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

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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.

B. Expanding the Pharmacy First model to include new services, and better integrate pharmacy into the NHS App.

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.

Conference in particular endorses the paper's proposals to:

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.

2. Get general practice, community and neighbourhood services, and hospitals working together under a patient-centric model of primary and community care, including by:

    a) Better utilising spare 111 capacity to support GP receptions at peak times and create pathways for senior paramedics to join GP teams.

    b) Reforming the Carr-Hill formula so that funding more fairly reflects need.

    c) Requiring developers to ensure there are enough healthcare professionals when people move into new developments.

    d) Expanding support for low-income patients to access primary care.

3. Put community pharmacy on a sustainable footing by properly rewarding an expanded Pharmacy First service,

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making it fairer for rural and coastal communities, allowing NHS App booking, improving medicines safety information and reviewing prescription charge exemptions.

4. Repair NHS dentistry by replacing the Units of Dental Activity contract with a prevention-focused model, guaranteeing urgent and emergency appointments, protecting check-ups for children and vulnerable groups, supporting supervised toothbrushing, and expanding dental recruitment and retention incentives in underserved areas, which would especially benefit ethnic minority communities.

5. Care for healthcare professionals as people themselves, by making general practice more sustainable and rewarding, freeing up GP time, supporting GPs to lead multidisciplinary teams, embedding clinical pharmacists and other qualified professionals safely, and creating routes for experienced paramedics to join GP teams.

6. Support community optometry and high street providers to deliver eye and ear care closer to home, including glaucoma monitoring, cataract pathways, urgent minor eye care, hearing aid fittings and minor ear infection treatment, reducing unnecessary GP and hospital appointments and helping people stay independent for 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.

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 Sunday 20 September; see page 9.

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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)

Conference notes that:

I. More than one in ten people over 65 years in the community live with frailty, and frailty affects over half of adults in hospital or care home settings.

II. The number of people in the UK over the age of 85 is set to double by 2045.

III. People who have kept the same GP for more than 15 years had a 25 per cent lower chance of dying than those with a GP relationship lasting a year or less.

IV. For older people and those with long-term conditions

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having the same GP helps avoid hospital admissions, which saves the NHS money in the long term.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Conference believes that:

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.

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.

Conference reaffirms the Liberal Democrat commitment to:

A. Fix social care, including through sustained increases in

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funding for local authorities, which are the cornerstone of the social care system, a higher Carer's Minimum Wage and by better supporting family carers with guaranteed respite care and a dedicated carer support service in every hospital.

B. Give everyone 70+ and everyone with long-term health conditions access to a named GP.

C. Tackle loneliness and isolation by refreshing the national strategy for loneliness, to be overseen by a dedicated Minister for Tackling Loneliness; and by expanding social prescribing and investing in relevant community projects.

Conference calls on the Government to:

1. Introduce a dedicated frailty service in every community which:

    a) Ensures those arriving at hospital are identified by frailty specialists who coordinate tailored care, with an emphasis on providing care at home.

    b) Ensures patients can discuss with frailty specialists the outcomes they want for their health, living standards and independence, with ongoing care reflecting these preferences.

    c) Works with local government, voluntary and state sectors, as well as with family carers, to provide high-quality tailored care in the community for patients with frailty or complex needs.

    d) Works in every nursing and residential home, bringing the NHS to residents and ensuring they have quality care, with an agreed care plan if they become very unwell.

    e) Ensures every frail patient and their carer has ongoing support from pharmacists, nurses and others for managing their health, including using medicines in the correct way.

2. Invest in a major expansion of step-down care and home-

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based reablement to ensure people are always guaranteed the timely intermediate care they need and are not trapped in hospital.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

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and costs to the NHS.

10. Establish a Commissioner for Older People and Ageing to promote and protect the rights of older people, ensuring policy across government departments takes account of 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)

Conference notes that:

A. Misogyny has evolved in the digital age, with the rise of the 'manosphere' and 'incel culture' spreading hateful ideologies linked to real-world violence.

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

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

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

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

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

Conference further notes that:

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

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

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

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

Conference believes that:

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

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

C. Effective action on VAWG must recognise the distinct

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experiences of minority women.

D. The Labour Government, like its Conservative predecessors, is failing adequately to tackle online harms against women and girls.

E. The law must keep pace with emerging technologies and evolving forms of abuse to protect women and girls.

Conference reaffirms the Liberal Democrats' commitment to tackling VAWG in all its forms.

Conference calls on the Government to:

1. Immediately bring into force all relevant sections of the Victims and Courts Bill 2026 and the Crime and Policing Act 2026.
2. Urgently review the Online Safety Act to ensure that Ofcom uses its enforcement powers earlier, as a first, not a last, resort to hold platforms to account.
3. Make Ofcom's guidance on VAWG an enforceable code of practice with real consequences for failure to comply.
4. Deliver all commitments on online harms in the VAWG Strategy without delay.
5. Require platforms to publish regular assessments of their role in facilitating misogynistic abuse and the steps taken to mitigate it.
6. Reinvest fines levied under the Online Safety Act into digital literacy, healthy relationships and online gender-based violence prevention education.
7. Extend police charging powers for lower-level VAWG offences, including online stalking, technology-facilitated domestic abuse and harassment, to speed up charging 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

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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

Conference notes:

a) The UK is a global powerhouse in the tech sector, and a world leader in artificial intelligence, with the third largest market in the world.

b) The UK's academic and research foundations are world-leading, with the UK ranking first among all G7 countries for field-weighted citation impact in science and technology research.

c) That 71 per cent of UK businesses cite unclear rules as a barrier to adopting AI, and 57 per cent of the banking sector cite regulatory uncertainty as an investment barrier.

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

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

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

Conference believes that:

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

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

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

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

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

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

Conference reaffirms Liberal Democrat pledges to:

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

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cent of GDP.

B. Quintuple proof-of-concept funding to £200 million across five years.

C. Create a network of regional innovation centres across the UK, ensuring that every nation and major English region can support university-industry collaboration with state-of-the-art research facilities.

D. Introduce government-backed seed funding loans for companies born from university research, and expand the definition of commercialisation so that university-derived SMEs and student startups are eligible.

E. Attract international talent by reforming visa processes to replace arbitrary salary thresholds with a flexible merit-based system and allowing Masters and PhD students to found startups during their studies.

Conference calls on the UK Government to back British innovation and remove barriers to financing by:

i) Closing the scale-up gaps by reviewing the £250,000 Seed Enterprise Investment Scheme limit and creating a scientist-led upfront pre-clearance system for R&D tax reliefs.

ii) Prioritising world-leading British tech in public contracts and trialling a 30 per cent 'social value' requirement for the procurement of digital services.

iii) Integrating AI into industrial strategies under a new Department for Growth, and extending Treasury and OBR forecast horizons to assess long-term technological impacts and provide certainty to investors.

iv) Creating 'AI Sandbox' programmes in partnership with local authorities, where startups and local SMEs can test new AI service models in small-scale realistic settings.

v) Developing an AI Compute Foundations Strategy prioritising domestic strengths in low-power inference, chip design, and edge AI.

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Conference also calls on the Government to build trust amongst the public through empowering individuals to use AI by:

a) Establishing a National People's Strategy which integrates AI skills into the curriculum, and continuing training throughout an individual's professional life with an AI training guarantee for adults.

a) Widening the scope of the AI Security Institute to include ethical considerations, ensuring that AI systems are developed to use data responsibly and do not entrench existing inequalities.

c) Securing international leadership by upholding the Council of Europe AI Framework Convention and using it to pioneer enforceable multilateral standards for democratic AI governance.

Conference further calls on the Government to ensure that communities can benefit from AI opportunities by:

1. Developing a comprehensive digital sovereignty strategy using strategic sovereign procurement policy to protect critical public functions from total foreign dependence.

2. Requiring all new AI infrastructure to meet community benefit standards, ensuring local populations directly gain from new developments through local jobs, skills training and directing their waste heat to district heating networks or to generating electricity.

3. Confronting the AI energy dilemma by commissioning independent demand assessments and establishing regional data clusters and AI Growth Zones, designed alongside industry and connected directly to target sectors.

4. Ensuring rural and remote communities can fully seize the opportunities of the AI age through a national commitment to roll out gigabit broadband to every home and business, while embedding access and upskilling 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)

Conference notes that:

I. The privatised water industry model has completely failed; water companies have accumulated £70 billion in debt and paid out £83 billion in inflation-adjusted dividends since privatisation - compared to just £236 billion spent on infrastructure over the same period.

II. Up to 20 per cent of an average customer's water bill now goes purely to servicing corporate debt, rising to 28 per cent for Thames Water customers.

III. An average of 3 billion litres of water is wasted every day in England and Wales due to leaky pipes, with Thames Water ranking as the worst offender with a three-year average of 592 million litres lost per day.

IV. Over 2.5 million households are currently in debt to their water company, highlighting a growing crisis of water

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poverty across the country.

V. Liberal Democrats have consistently led the charge for structural reform, having called since November 2022 for the replacement of Ofwat, a position vindicated by the Independent Water Commission's final report in July 2025.

VI. Water companies continue to discharge sewage at unknown volumes into rivers, lakes, and coastlines while simultaneously handing out massive executive bonuses and failing to invest in fixing crumbling infrastructure.

VII. Both Labour and the Conservatives refused to support any of the 44 amendments tabled by the Liberal Democrats to the Water (Special Measures) Bill, which covered pollution targets, executive bonus bans, volume monitoring and mutual ownership.

VIII. Failing water companies are currently negotiating restructuring deals with creditors at billpayers' expense, despite clearly meeting the insolvency and performance grounds, set out in legislation, which should trigger them being taken into an administration process.

IX. Per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) also known as 'forever chemicals', have been found in all but one of tested UK rivers, harming nature and human health.

Conference believes that:

A. Profit must never again be put before the environment, public health or billpayers.

B. It is essential that water companies operate on a stable financial footing, so that they can afford to invest in the things that matter – upgrading infrastructure, increasing capacity at sewage treatment works, cleaning up lakes, rivers and seas and improving customer service.

C. Ofwat is entirely unfit to hold failing monopolies to account, and the current regulatory framework must be fundamentally replaced, not just rebranded.

D. True environmental justice and long-term financial

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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.

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.

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.

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.

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.

Conference calls on the Government to:

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).

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.

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.

4. Introduce a nation-wide single social tariff for water bills to guarantee that vulnerable households are protected

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from sky-rocketing costs.

5. Publish a clear policy setting out when the Environment Secretary will make an application to the High Court to place a failing water company into a SAR, as recommended by the Cunliffe Review.

6. Create an additional environmental trigger for Special Administration of water companies, transferring operations to a mutual benefit model where there is chronic or egregious environmental failure.

7. Establish an Environmental Improvement Objective so that the new regulator does not repeat Ofwat's failure to invest in nature and enforce environmental standards.

8. Pursue a four nations agreement to introduce a PFAS restriction to prevent the manufacture and release of 'forever chemicals', alongside a PFAS remediation fund requiring polluters to pay for cleaning up forever chemical 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

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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

Conference notes that:

i) Liberal Democrats champion cycling as a vital tool to improve public health, reduce toxic air pollution and relieve urban traffic congestion.

ii) The Liberal Democrats were the first UK political party to adopt the recommendations of the landmark 'Get Britain Cycling' report as official party policy.

iii) The UK's estimated full market size for e-bikes in 2025 was 149,000 units.

iv) While motor vehicles remain by far the greatest cause of death and injury on the roads, public concern is rising over the dangerous misuse of illegally modified or unregulated e-bikes on pavements and in pedestrianised zones.

v) In May 2024, changes to the law via the Criminal Justice Bill established that causing death or serious injury by dangerous or careless cycling is a criminal offence, carrying maximum penalties of up to 14 years in prison.

vi) A proliferation of unregulated, oversized, and illegal e-bikes capable of excessive speeds are posing risks to pedestrians, particularly the elderly, children and disabled individuals.

vii) These high-speed, illegal e-bikes are increasingly being weaponised by criminal gangs and used to facilitate anti-social behaviour.

viii) The current regulatory system for e-bikes is confusing,

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outdated, and seldom enforced, meaning that the unrestricted online sale of illegal modification kits and high-power bikes continues entirely unchecked.

Conference believes that:

a) Everyone has the right to feel safe on streets and pavements, and cyclists must recognise their clear duty of care towards pedestrians and other commuters.

b) Dangerous or criminal riders must not be above the law, and the reputational damage caused by illegal e-bikes risks undermining the broader public case for legal, green active travel.

c) The vast majority of delivery drivers, couriers, and everyday cyclists are law-abiding individuals trying to earn a living or travel sustainably, and they deserve protection from rampant e-bike theft.

d) Enforcement action by the police alone cannot solve this crisis; the government must aggressively tackle the supply chain and unrestricted online marketplaces that flood the streets with illegal vehicles.

e) Multi-million-pound courier and gig-economy platforms must take corporate responsibility for the safety, vehicle legality, and road conduct of the riders operating on their apps.

Conference calls on the Government to:

1. Implement strict restrictions or bans on the online sale and importation of illegal high-power e-bikes, untethered conversion kits, and oversized electric vehicles that breach standard Electrically Assisted Pedal Cycle safety limits.

2. Overhaul the confusing existing legal framework to provide clear, updated definitions separating legal active travel from high-speed, unregistered light electric vehicles.

3. Provide police forces with updated training to confidently spot, intercept and confiscate illegally modified bikes, ensuring that dangerous cycling laws are robustly

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enforced.

4. Establish statutory liability standards for gig-economy delivery platforms, legally requiring them to verify that their riders utilise road-legal vehicles, hold valid insurance and comply with traffic laws.

5. Deliver a comprehensive nation-wide active travel strategy that invests in secure bike infrastructure to combat theft, alongside dedicated cycle paths between key transport links to keep pedestrians and legal cyclists safe.

6. Take steps to enforce compliance of e-bike and delivery 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)

Conference notes that:

A. In the past decade, the UK has experienced the highest food price inflation in 40 years.

B. The proportion of food-secure households has fallen from

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92 per cent in 2020 to 90 per cent in 2023, meaning that hundreds of thousands of families can no longer reliably put food on the table.

C. The UK sources food from domestic production and trade at a roughly 60:40 ratio, leaving it dangerously exposed to global shocks.

D. Extreme weather events continue to have a significant effect on domestic production, hitting arable crops, fruit and vegetables hardest.

E. Conflict in the Middle East has driven up oil, gas and fertiliser costs, with those increases rippling through the entire supply chain until they land on the weekly shop.

F. The Food and Drink Federation expects food inflation to reach at least 9 per cent by the end of the year.

G. No income group meets dietary recommendations, with the poorest 10 per cent eating on average 42 per cent less fruit and vegetables than recommended, compared to the richest, who eat 13 per cent less.

H. Disruptions to the food supply chain can arise from a range of risks such as extreme weather events, cyber attacks, global conflicts or pandemics.

Conference further notes that:

I. In England, the agricultural budget was frozen at £2.4 billion between 2019 and 2024, while farm input costs rose by 44 per cent over the same period.

II. Straw costs more than doubled, while the costs of electricity, fertiliser, animal feed and motor fuels all rose between 38 per cent and 50 per cent, and interest rates on loans and overdrafts increased by 600 per cent.

III. Under the Conservatives, farm payments fell by 20 per cent in real terms since 2015, equivalent to the loss of £722 million in public funding for farmers, and the government consistently underspent even its frozen budget.

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

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

Conference believes that:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Conference calls for:

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

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2. A £1 billion increase in the farming budget to support farmers.

3. The UK Government to agree with the devolved administrations a UK-wide food-security target requiring the UK to produce at least 75 per cent of its own food by 2035, with targets around locally produced food.

4. A new seasonal agricultural workers scheme with guaranteed minimum standards to ensure that harvests are not lost to labour shortages, decided on an annual basis.

5. A public procurement requirement for schools, hospitals and government canteens in England to source a minimum percentage of food from the UK.

6. A ban on the practice of shrinkflation, requiring clear labelling when product sizes are reduced without a proportional price reduction.

7. Enhanced payments for Environmental Land Management Schemes to support nature-friendly farming and protect long-term food security.

8. Support for farms to protect the environment by permanently reopening applications for the Sustainable Farming Incentive and pledging not to close it again.

9. A statutory requirement for the government to publish an annual food security audit, with accountability to Parliament.

10. Implementation of Local Food Plans where local authorities in England assess food accessibility within their areas, integrating supply chains and economic growth strategies to address whether all citizens can 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.

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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 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.

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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

Sir Ed Davey MP

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

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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

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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:

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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

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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.

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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.

Standing Orders

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:

Standing Orders

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:

Standing Orders

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.

Standing Orders

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

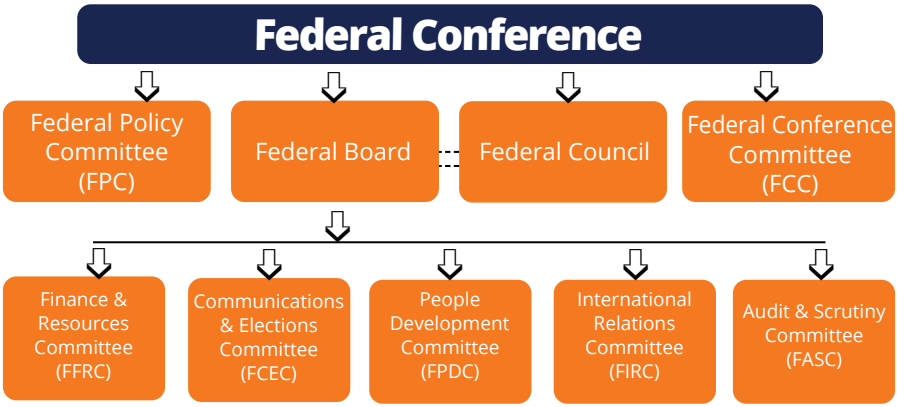
14.1 Chair and Vice Chairs

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.

The Federal Party

The Federal Party is responsible for the Party's overall strategy, overall preparations for Parliamentary Elections; policy-making for the Federal Party and any State Parties that have passed up their policy-making powers; the overall presentation, image and media relations of the Party; and our international relationships.

It has the following committee structure:



The roles of each Committee are outlined in Articles 9 through 16 of the Federal Constitution. The Committees have the following Chairs:

- Federal Board: Josh Babarinde MP, Party President
- Federal Conference Committee: Cllr Nick da Costa
- Federal Policy Committee: Sir Ed Davey MP
- Federal Finance & Resources Committee: Cllr Mike Cox, Registered Treasurer
- Federal Communications & Elections Committee: Baroness Cllr Kath Pinnock
- Federal People Development Committee: Ellie Hudspith
- Federal International Relations Committee: David Chalmers
- Federal Audit & Scrutiny Committee: Dr David Radcliffe
- Federal Council: Cllr Tim Pickstone

Details of all the Committees, their functions and members can be found on the Party website at:

www.libdems.org.uk/committees_organisations

The Conference training session 'How the Party works' will provide further detail.

Join in Online!

@libdems

www.libdems.org.uk/conference

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