

## **2019 Manifesto:**

<https://www.libdems.org.uk/plan>

Our first priorities in the next parliament will be:

- \* An emergency programme to insulate all Britain's homes by 2030, cutting emissions and fuel bills and ending fuel poverty.
- \* Investing in renewable power so that at least 80 per cent of UK electricity is generated from renewables by 2030 – and banning fracking for good.
- \* Protecting nature and the countryside, tackling biodiversity loss and planting 60 million trees a year to absorb carbon, protect wildlife and improve health.
- \* Investing in public transport, electrifying Britain's railways and ensuring that all new cars are electric by 2030.

### **4.10 - Promoting Wellbeing**

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- \* Ensure that the environment is protected for future generations with clean air to breathe and urgent action to tackle the climate emergency.

### **6.1 - Climate Action Now**

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The climate emergency can only be tackled effectively by ensuring that every relevant decision taken by national government, local councils, businesses, investors, communities and households makes progress towards the net zero objective. We will set a new legally binding target to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2045 at the latest, and implement a comprehensive climate action plan, cutting emissions across all sectors. To realise these goals, we will:

- \* Require all companies registered in the UK and listed on UK stock exchanges to set targets consistent with the Paris Agreement on climate change and to report on their implementation; and establish a general corporate duty of care for the environment and human rights (also see Better Business, section 4.5).
- \* Regulate financial services to encourage green investments, including requiring pension funds and managers to show that their portfolio investments are consistent with the Paris Agreement, and creating new powers for regulators to act if banks and other investors are not managing climate risks properly.
- \* Establish a Department for Climate Change and Natural Resources, appoint a cabinet-level Chief Secretary for Sustainability in the Treasury to coordinate government-wide action to make the economy sustainable resource-efficient and zero-carbon, and require every government agency to account for its contribution towards meeting climate targets.
- \* Establish UK and local Citizens' Climate Assemblies to engage the public in tackling the climate emergency.
- \* Create a statutory duty on all local authorities to produce a Zero Carbon Strategy, including plans for local energy, transport and land use, and devolve powers and funding to enable every council to implement it.
- \* Guarantee an Office of Environmental Protection that is fully independent of government, and possesses powers and resources to enforce compliance with climate and environmental targets.
- \* Increase government expenditure on climate and environmental objectives, reaching at least five per cent of the total within five years.
- \* Support investment and innovation in zero-carbon and resource-efficient infrastructure and technologies by creating a new Green Investment Bank and increasing funding for Innovate UK and new Catapult innovation and technology centres on farming and land use and on carbon dioxide

removal.

- \* Implement the UK's G7 pledge to end fossil fuel subsidies by 2025, and provide Just Transition funding for areas and communities negatively affected by the transition to net zero greenhouse gas emissions.

## **6.2 - Renewable Energy**

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Thanks to Liberal Democrat policies in government, the UK has made major strides in cutting emissions from power generation; wind power is now the cheapest form of electricity generation. Now we can go further: we aim to decarbonise the power sector completely, supporting renewables and household and community energy to create jobs and cut fossil fuel imports. We will:

- \* Accelerate the deployment of renewable power, providing more funding, removing the Conservatives' restrictions on solar and wind and building more interconnectors to guarantee security of supply; we aim to reach at least 80 per cent renewable electricity in the UK by 2030.
- \* Expand community and decentralised energy, support councils to develop local electricity generation and require all new homes to be fitted with solar panels.
- \* Ban fracking because of its negative impacts on climate change, the energy mix and the local environment.
- \* Support investment and innovation in cutting-edge energy technologies, including tidal and wave power, energy storage, demand response, smart grids and hydrogen.
- \* Provide an additional £12 billion over five years to support these commitments, and ensure that the National Infrastructure Commission, National Grid, the energy regulator Ofgem, and the Crown Estate work together to deliver our net zero climate objective.

## **6.3 - Warm Homes and Lower Energy Bills**

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Everyone should be able to afford to heat their home so that it is warm enough for them to live in. However, an estimated 2.5 million households in England live in fuel poverty, where they cannot afford to heat their homes to a decent standard partly due to poor insulation and heat loss – contributing to climate change and causing ill-health and early deaths. We will implement an emergency ten-year programme to reduce energy consumption from all buildings, cutting emissions and energy bills and ending fuel poverty – and generating employment – supported by investing over £6 billion a year on home insulation and zero-carbon heating by the fifth year of the Parliament. We will:

- \* Cut energy bills, end fuel poverty by 2025 and reduce emissions from buildings, including by providing free retrofits for low-income homes, piloting a new subsidised Energy-Saving Homes scheme, graduating Stamp Duty Land Tax by the energy rating of the property and reducing VAT on home insulation.
- \* Empower councils to develop community energy-saving projects, including delivering housing energy efficiency improvements street by street, which cuts costs.
- \* Require all new homes and non-domestic buildings to be built to a zero-carbon standard (where as much energy is generated on-site, through renewable sources, as is used), by 2021, rising to a more ambitious ('Passivhaus') standard by 2025.
- \* Increase minimum energy efficiency standards for privately rented properties and remove the cost cap on improvements.
- \* Adopt a Zero-Carbon Heat Strategy, including reforming the Renewable Heat Incentive, requiring the phased installation of heat pumps in homes and businesses off the gas grid, and piloting projects to determine the best future mix of zero-carbon heating solutions.

## 6.4 - Green Industry, Green Jobs and Green Products

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Given the right support, British businesses have the chance to be world leaders in green technology. UK low-carbon businesses already have a combined turnover of £80 billion and directly employ 400,000 people, and under our proposals these will grow. We will provide support for innovation to cut energy and fossil fuel use in industrial processes – reducing emissions, cutting dependence on fossil fuel imports and generating jobs and prosperity. We will:

- \* Reduce emissions from industrial processes by supporting carbon capture and storage and new low-carbon processes for cement and steel production.
- \* Provide more advice to companies on cutting emissions, support the development of regional industrial clusters for zero-carbon innovation and increase the Industrial Energy Transformation Fund.
- \* Expand the market for green products and services with steadily higher green criteria in public procurement policy.
- \* End support from UK Export Finance for fossil fuel-related activities, and press for higher environmental standards for export credit agencies throughout the OECD.

The successful economies of the future will be those which adopt 'circular economy' techniques, cutting resource use, waste and pollution by maximising recovery, reuse, recycling and remanufacturing. This will cut costs for consumers and businesses, protect the environment and create new jobs and enterprises. We will introduce a Zero-Waste and Resource Efficiency Act to ensure that the UK moves towards a circular economy, including:

- \* Banning non-recyclable single-use plastics and replace them with affordable alternatives, aiming for their complete elimination within three years, as a first step towards ending the 'throwaway society' culture and an ambition to end plastic waste exports by 2030.

- \* Benefitting consumers through better product design for repairability, reuse and recycling, including extending the forthcoming EU 'right to repair' legislation for consumer goods, so helping small repair businesses and community groups combat 'planned obsolescence'.
- \* Introducing legally binding targets for reducing the consumption of key natural resources and other incentives for businesses to improve resource efficiency.
- \* Extending deposit return schemes for all food and drink bottles and containers, working with the devolved administrations to ensure consistency across the UK.
- \* Establishing a statutory waste recycling target of 70 per cent in England, extend separate food waste collections to at least 90 per cent of homes by 2024, and strengthen incentives to reduce packaging and reduce waste sent to landfill and incineration.

## **6.5 - Saving Nature and the Countryside**

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A healthy natural environment, where people breathe clean air, drink clean water and enjoy the beauty of the natural world, lies at the heart of the society and the economy Liberal Democrats want to create. Yet nature is under threat: unsustainable farming practices are depleting the soil and, together with air and water pollution, contributing to a rapid decline in the numbers of insects, birds and other animals. One in seven UK species are at risk of extinction.

We will protect the natural environment and reverse biodiversity loss at the same time as combating climate change. We will support farmers to protect and restore the natural environment alongside their critical roles in producing food, providing employment and promoting tourism, leisure and health and wellbeing. We will:

- \* Introduce a Nature Act to restore the natural environment through setting legally binding near-term and long-term targets for improving water, air, soil and biodiversity, and supported by funding streams of at least £18 billion over five years.
- \* Combat climate change, and benefit nature and people by coordinating the planting of 60 million trees a year and introducing requirements for the greater use of sustainably harvested wood in construction.
- \* Invest in large scale restoration of peatlands, heathland, native woodlands, saltmarshes, wetlands and coastal waters, helping to absorb carbon, protect against floods, improve water quality and protect habitats, including through piloting 'rewilding' approaches.
- \* Reduce basic agricultural support payments to the larger recipients and redeploy the savings to support the public goods that come from effective land management, including restoring nature and protecting the countryside, preventing flooding and combating climate change through measures to increase soil carbon and expand native woodland.
- \* Introduce a National Food Strategy, including the use of public procurement policy, to promote the production and consumption of healthy, sustainable and affordable food and cut down on food waste.
- \* Support producers by broadening the remit of the Groceries Code Adjudicator and supporting them with access to markets.
- \* Significantly increase the amount of accessible green space, including protecting up to a million acres, completing the coastal path, exploring a 'right to roam' for waterways and creating a new designation of National Nature Parks.
- \* Give the Local Green Space designation the force of law.
- \* Protect and restore England's lakes, rivers and wetlands, including through reform of water management and higher water efficiency standards, and establish a 'blue belt' of marine protected areas

covering at least 50 per cent of UK waters by 2030, in partnership with UK overseas territories.

- \* Create a new 'British Overseas Ecosystems Fund' for large-scale environmental restoration projects in the UK Overseas Territories and sovereign bases, home to 94 per cent of our unique wildlife.
- \* Establish a £5 billion fund for flood prevention and climate adaptation over the course of the parliament to improve flood defences, and introduce high standards for flood resilience for buildings and infrastructure in flood risk areas.
- \* Ensure that sustainability lies at the heart of fisheries policy, rebuilding depleted fish stocks to achieve their former abundance. Fishers, scientists and conservationists should all be at the centre of a decentralised and regionalised fisheries management system. Immigration policy should also be flexible enough to ensure that both the catching and processing sectors have access to the labour they need.
- \* Increase the budget for the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, ensuring that agencies such as Natural England and the Environment Agency are properly funded.

## **6.6 - Improving Transport**

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Britain's transport systems are broken. Commuting by rail is expensive, unreliable and unpleasant, and away from the major commuter routes, buses, trams and trains are so infrequent and expensive that cars are essentially made a necessity. This in turn has made air pollution – mostly caused by cars – one of the biggest causes of preventable illness in the UK, causing at least 40,000 premature deaths a year and costing the NHS £15 billion. And surface transport is now the largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the UK, with almost no progress in reducing them since 1990. The UK's share of international aviation and shipping emissions has risen by almost 80 per cent since 1990. Liberal Democrats will meet this challenge by:

- \* Investing in public transport, buses, trams and railways to enable people to travel more easily while reducing their impact on the environment.
- \* Placing a far higher priority on encouraging walking and cycling – the healthiest forms of transport.
- \* Accelerating the transition to ultra-low-emission transport – cars, buses and trains – through taxation, subsidy and regulation.

Together these steps will tackle the clean air crisis, meet the challenge of climate change, improve people’s health, stimulate local and regional prosperity and develop British zero-carbon industries, with benefits for jobs, growth and exports.

## **6.7 - Clean and Green**

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To achieve our net-zero climate target by 2045, we aim to reduce emissions from surface transport to near zero; at the same time the transition to electric vehicles and from private to public transport will drastically cut air pollution. Emissions from the UK’s share of international aviation are much more difficult to tackle; we need to accelerate the development of new technologies and cut demand for flying, particularly from the 15 per cent of individuals who take 70 per cent of flights. We will:

- \* Accelerate the rapid take-up of electric vehicles by reforming vehicle taxation, cutting VAT on EVs to 5 per cent and increasing the rate of installation of charging points, including residential on-street points and ultra-fast chargers at service stations. We will ensure that, by 2030, every new car and small van sold is electric.
- \* Pass a Clean Air Act, based on World Health Organisation guidelines, enforced by a new Air Quality Agency. The Act will enshrine the legal right to unpolluted air wherever you live.

- \* Extend Ultra-Low Emission Zones to ten more towns and cities in England and ensure that all private hire vehicles and new buses licensed to operate in urban areas are ultra-low-emission or zero-emission vehicles by 2025; we will provide £2 billion to support this transformation.
- \* Shift more freight from road to rail, including electrifying lines leading from major ports as an urgent priority, and amend the current HGV road user levy to take account of carbon emissions.
- \* Support innovation in zero-emission technologies, including batteries and hydrogen fuel cells, supplementing government funding with a new Clean Air Fund from industry.
- \* Reduce the climate impact of flying by reforming the taxation of international flights to focus on those who fly the most, while reducing costs for those who take one or two international return flights per year, placing a moratorium on the development of new runways (net) in the UK, opposing any expansion of Heathrow, Gatwick or Stansted and any new airport in the Thames Estuary, and introducing a zero-carbon fuels blending requirement for domestic flights.

## **6.8 - Reducing the Need for Car Travel**

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Liberal Democrats will invest in public transport, improving its reliability and affordability, reform the planning systems to reduce the need to travel and promote cycling and walking. We will:

- \* Give new powers to local authorities and communities to improve transport in their areas, including the ability to introduce network-wide ticketing, like in London.
- \* Implement, in cooperation with local authorities, light rail schemes for trams and tram-trains where these are appropriate solutions to public transport requirements.

- \* Restore bus routes and add new routes where there is local need; we will provide £4.5 billion over five years for this programme.
- \* Introduce a nationwide strategy to promote walking and cycling, including the creation of dedicated safe cycling lanes, increasing spending per head five-fold to reach 10 per cent of the transport budget.
- \* Build on the successful Local Sustainable Transport Fund established by the Liberal Democrats when in government, and workplace travel plans, to reduce the number of cars – particularly single-occupancy cars – used for commuting, and encourage the development of car-sharing schemes and car clubs and autonomous vehicles for public use.
- \* Amend planning rules to promote sustainable transport and land use.

## **6.9 - Fixing Britain's Railways**

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There is enormous scope to improve Britain's railways, providing reliable and affordable train services and cutting emissions. The Tories' and Labour's ideological obsessions – the former with privatisation, the latter with nationalisation – only serve to get in the way of making real improvements through investment and regulation. We will improve the railways, reform the franchising system and improve services to customers. We will:

- \* Freeze rail fares for commuters and season ticket holders for a parliament, while we fix our railways.
- \* Extend Britain's rail network, improve stations, reopen smaller stations and restore twin-track lines to major routes.
- \* Convert the rail network to ultra-low-emission technology (electric or hydrogen) by 2035, and provide funding for light rail and trams.

- \* Support High Speed 2, Northern Powerhouse Rail, East-West Rail and Crossrail 2, but ensure far tighter financial controls and increased accountability to ensure that these projects are value for money, and address problems with implementation to ensure that HS2 opens as early as possible to meet our decarbonisation goals while minimising the destruction of precious UK habitats and woodland.
- \* Start a revolution in rail franchising by opening up the bidding process to public sector companies, local or combined authorities, not-for-profits and mutuals – which have the potential to deliver much better services than private operators.
- \* Build into new rail franchise agreements a stronger focus on customers, including investment in new stations, lines and modern trains.
- \* Create a new Railways Agency to oversee the operations of the railway network, removing the Department for Transport from day-to-day decision-making.
- \* Be far more proactive in sanctioning and ultimately sacking train operators if they fail to provide a high-quality public service to their customers.
- \* Improve the experience of people who rely on the railways for work by investing in commuter routes and the integration of rail, bus and cycle routes.
- \* Fix the broken fares and ticketing system so that it provides better value for money.
- \* Improve disabled access to public transport via the Access for All programme.

## **11.5 - Global Climate Action Now**

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The climate emergency is a global challenge and requires a global solution. However, with the US withdrawing from the Paris Agreement and with most national climate policies falling well short of the Agreement's ambition to limit the global temperature rise to 1.5°C, this global solution looks a long way off. Neither the Conservatives nor Labour have a plan to tackle this: the Conservatives have given no real thought to the climate emergency, and Labour are only interested in repeating empty slogans. Liberal Democrats are the only party with a detailed plan to lead global efforts to combat the climate emergency. We will:

- \* Support the Paris Agreement by playing a leadership role in international efforts to combat climate change, demonstrating commitment by rapidly reducing emissions from the UK economy, increasing development spending on climate objectives and aiming to persuade all countries to commit to net zero climate goals by the 2020 UN climate conference in Glasgow.
- \* Use our role in the EU to tackle the climate emergency, by setting a binding, EU-wide net zero target of 2050, and continuing to take part in the EU's Internal Energy Market, to provide access to clean energy sources while keeping costs low.
- \* Strengthen climate and environmental goals in EU trade and investment agreements and refuse to enter any trade agreements with countries that have policies counter to the Paris Agreement, including the Mercosur-EU free trade agreement because of the Brazilian government's actions in the Amazon.
- \* Initiate negotiations within the UN for a legally binding international treaty on plastics reduction.
- \* Argue for ambitious new legally binding international targets to protect global biodiversity, and an effective global oceans treaty to create a network of ocean sanctuaries. We will also provide greater resources for international environmental cooperation, particularly on actions to tackle illegal and unsustainable trade in timber, wildlife, ivory, and fish.

- \* Argue for an end to all fossil fuel subsidies world-wide and provide aid to developing countries to help them transition to clean sources of energy.
  
- \* Increase the proportion of the aid budget committed to tackling climate change and environmental degradation: helping countries mitigate the impact of climate change and other environmental crises and support climate refugees.