

# WANTED - simple, liberal ideas for London



Liberal Reform is launching a commission into radical ideas for London, to put together a publication for late 2015. We need simple, liberal ideas. Exciting ideas that inspire people.

Ideas that show people what we're about as a party and as liberals; so that when they cast their vote, they at least have a conception of what we're about. An openness to new ideas will hopefully attract thinkers and idealists to the party - as well as spark debate

as to the kind of London we want to live in.

We'll be publishing the results next year, but we're looking for the best ideas and potential contributors now, email me on -

**anthony.fairclough@liberalreform.org.uk** if you might want to be involved.

We'll also be beginning the debate on Twitter and Facebook, using #LRLdnIdeas.



## LIBERAL REFORM CONFERENCE BRIEFING

# WHY AREN'T YOUNG LIBERALS VOTING LIBERAL DEMOCRAT?



PAUL MARSHALL

KAVYA KAUSHIK

MIRANDA GREEN - CHAIR

JEREMY BROWNE MP

## LIBERAL REFORM'S MOTIONS 'SPECIAL' HIGHLIGHTS

The message that the party supports a streamlined national curriculum does not seem to have got through to the proposers of the motion on first aid in schools and child abuse, both of which call for additions to the curriculum.

There is plenty of competition for the prize for the oddest thing in a motion. The main contenders seem to be in the banking motion: that we want a safe way for small banks to fail (surely we want all banks to be able to fail safely?) and in the pre-manifesto, that we should 'invest every penny we can in education' -- which doesn't bode well for the NHS, Aid etc.



Sunday October 5th 13:00-14:00 - Crowne Plaza, Shuna

### Generation Y: Orange Bookers, but not Lib Dems?

Young people are instinctively liberal in almost every way. But large numbers don't support the Lib Dems. Our panel will look at the polling, and give us their view on how we can become the natural home for Generation Y.

## GET INVOLVED WITH LIBERAL REFORM

**SOCIAL**  
**ECONOMIC**  
**PERSONAL**  
**POLITICAL**



**Liberal Reform** is an internal party pressure group which promotes an emphasis on four-cornered liberalism: social, personal, economic and political. We think that only a commitment to broad, four-cornered liberalism, rather than a narrow interpretation of our party's inheritance, will secure the Liberal Democrats as the distinctively liberal party of British politics.

We believe in the power of markets and of trade to increase standards of living, while recognising that capitalism on its own fails to provide a number of the key elements of a liberal society. We believe that individuals do better when they are freed from state interference in their lives while recognising that the state has an important role in redistributing resources towards those who need help. We also believe that the institutions of that state need to be as democratic, open and responsive as possible. Only by emphasising all of the above do we believe we will fulfil our aim of creating the liberal society we as a party want to see.

Find out more, or sign up as a supporter at the link below.

## GLASGOW CONFERENCE MOTIONS

At the time of writing we are still waiting to see how Federal Conference Committee responds to the extraordinary opportunities opened up by the Scottish Referendum, particularly for the Liberal Democrats as the only party to have consistently campaigned for constitutional change.

In the short term Liberal Democrats should support the devolution of powers which were promised to the Scottish people but we also

need to be absolutely clear that the rules at Westminster need to be changed to prevent MPs from one part of the UK voting on issues which are devolved to their nation. It is a basic question of fairness and one which will give UKIP a huge opportunity unless we and the other two parties agree to a quick rule change.

### "There is no money left"

We are disappointed that the Federal Policy Committee has chosen to have the debate on the pre-manifesto paper divorced from the costings, which we are told will be published 'later'. There are at least 13 additional

spending commitments in the paper alongside a very welcome commitment to eliminate the structural deficit. But none of the spending commitments are costed and the proposed tax increases are nothing like enough to generate enough revenue to cover the additional costs.

[www.liberalreform.org.uk/get-involved](http://www.liberalreform.org.uk/get-involved)



#### **F4 - Reducing Poverty and Discrimination**

Overall this motion contains some very sensible policies, but it fails in its analysis by containing no mention at all of the importance of economic growth in reducing poverty. Over one billion people across the globe have been taken out of the most abject poverty over the last twenty years as a result of increased trade and economic liberalisation and development. Liberals should be proud that liberal economics and free trade have had such a profound positive effect.

#### **F6 - One Member One Vote**

Really what's not to like here? The only valid reason to be against it that we have heard was that 'the wrong people will get elected' which has at least the benefit of being honest. Delegates can expect to hear all sorts of abstruse arguments against OMOV – but it is basically a question of how democratic we want our party to be.

#### **F11 - Reforming the Welfare System**

We hope this will be amended to make it clear that the party is supporting Andrew George's bill to reform the 'bedroom tax'. We are also supportive of another amendment which seeks to stop landlords implementing blanket bans on tenants who are in receipt of Housing Benefit.

#### **F13 - Doing What Works to Cut Crime**

This is a good motion with some good liberal policies. We are concerned about lines 100-103, calling for the end of imprisonment of women who do not need to be incarcerated – surely we should be looking to end the incarceration of *all* who do not need to be imprisoned. There is also an amendment raising concerns over recent examples of the use of police bail and search warrants, which we are supporting.

#### **F16 - Protecting Public Services and Making Them Work For You**

The massive remit of the working group into public services is reflected in both the length of the debate on this motion (over two hours) and the problems that arise from considering all public services together. We are particularly surprised by lines 142-145 which seem to present a dichotomy between competition and the needs of patients. Liberals ought to support choice and competition precisely because they serve the interests of public service users.

#### **F18 - Tackling Child Abuse**

It's right that after recent scandals there is a motion on this topic (though we hope there will be an amendment to cover the situation in Rotherham). This is very much an area where we need to listen to those with experience in the fields: a legal duty to report suspicion of abuse sounds fine but is a potential minefield give the possibility that health, education and social service workers will cover their backs by reporting all possible cases – taking attention and resources away from actual cases of abuse.

#### **F19 - Adapting to Climate Change in the UK**

The costs of adapting to climate change in the UK are likely to be significant, and we hope to see an amendment selected that enshrines the "polluter pays" principle into our policy on adaptation.

#### **F21 - Building the Affordable Homes We Need**

Will this motion make a significant difference to the shortage of homes? We don't think so. There is a real tension between our belief in localism and our desire to build 300,000 new homes a year, demonstrated by the numerous campaigns Liberal Democrats locally are running against home building (and our by-election gains in Guildford and Epping last week show how effective a campaigning tool this is).

Councils have usually moved fast to list development areas and to restrict development elsewhere. This is localism in practice, but government needs to retain the authority to set the overall amount of new homes that need to be built in each area. Only in this way will 300,000 homes be an achievable yearly target.

#### **F29 - Reclaiming the People's Game**

The Premier League is one of the best, if not the best football leagues in the world. We should be welcoming this success rather than criticising it on the dubious grounds that it is good at attracting foreign investment, and that it suffers from too great a desire to win.

#### **F30 - Pre-Manifesto Policy Paper**

There is lots to support in this motion including a balanced structural budget by 2017 and continuing to take the low paid out of income tax, but there are a number of areas where we have concern. The section on airports is frankly incoherent. We support the amendment from Lorely Burt and Stephen Gilbert that rules out Heathrow expansion but supports new capacity elsewhere on a pragmatic basis.

Taking away two sets of universal benefits in the form of winter fuel payments and free television licences, only to replace them with another – discount bus passes – is inconsistent.

#### **F33 - Age Ready Britain**

Another long laundry list not underpinned by any clear vision, this motion includes the 'triple lock' which is probably the most expensive motion at Conference - the OBR puts the cost at £14bn a year in real terms by 2060. We fully support protecting pensioners but are not sure why, even in the direst recession with low inflation and earnings growth, their incomes should automatically increase to such an extent. We would love to see a proper debate on the implications of the triple lock but are not holding our breath.

#### **F42 - Rebanking**

We have concerns there are echoes in this proposal of the enforced lending to high-risk areas that was one of the factors behind the sub-prime mortgage crisis in the US.