

LIBERAL REFORM

YORK BRIEFING

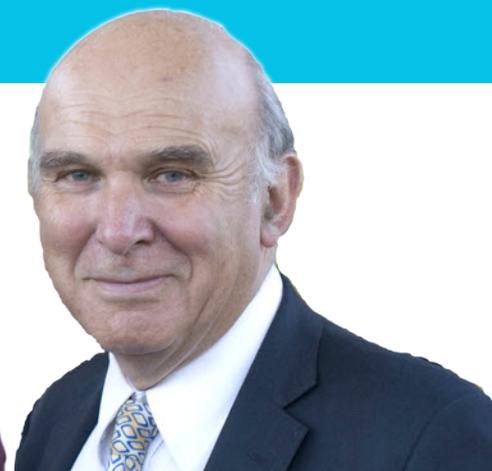
FRINGE EVENTS



JEREMY BROWNE MP



LISA SMART



DR VINCE CABLE MP

WHICH PARTY FOR THE LIBERALS? THE TORIES OR LIB DEMS?

Saturday 8 March, 8pm

Hilton Bootham Room

Liberal Reform and the Electoral Reform Society

Panelists: Jeremy Browne MP, Nick Tyrone (ERS), Ryan Shorthouse (Bright Blue), Peter Bingle, Chair: Lisa Smart, Hazel Grove PPC.

HAS THE COALITION SUCCEEDED IN REBALANCING THE BRITISH ECONOMY?

Saturday 8 March, 8pm

Hilton Walmgate Room

Liberal Reform & the Liberal Democrat Campaign for Manufacturing

Panelists: Vince Cable MP, Gordon Birtwistle MP, Liz Lynne (EEF), Chair: Wera Hobhouse

LIBERAL REFORM CONFERENCE BRIEFING

F3 - A Better, Fairer, More Sustainable Future for British Pubs

LR's view: minded to vote against

This motion ignores the crucial fact that people have chosen to visit pubs less frequently – driven by tough laws on drink driving, the smoking ban and the availability of a much wider choice of entertainment. It wants yet further micromanagement of the planning system and would inevitably lead to 'zombie pubs', that can't be closed but that don't make any money, the primary effect of which would be to damage other potentially profitable pubs.

Definitely one to listen to the debate but we are minded to vote against.

F4 - Making Migration Work for Britain

LR's view: support subject to the separate votes

This is likely to be one of conference's most controversial motions. Overall, while it is not a bad motion in policy terms it has failed to provide a framework for what a liberal immigration system could look like.

The call in line 18 for an annual Parliamentary debate and vote on immigration seems particularly eccentric, and we would support voting down this line in a separate vote.

We are also supporting an amendment that removes any ambiguity about our commitment to restoring sense to the student visa system, recent reforms to which have severely damaged Britain's crucial higher education sector.

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F5 - Reform of Planning

LR's view: refer back for further work

This is a motion of two parts. The first calls for many more new homes to be built. The second calls for a whole series of measures virtually every one of which would make it easier to stop new homes being built. It is ironic that we are debating this in York where the local party are currently campaigning to stop 22,000 new homes being built.

The party need to do some fresh thinking about where we are actually going to build new homes - we believe this motion should be referred back and the Federal Policy Committee should set up a working group to come up with some solutions to how we get more homes built.

F14 - Power to the People

LR's view: support amendments and the motion

Despite its unnecessary length, much of this motion is relatively good, though there are two amendments we would like to see taken.

We would like to see 'Devo Max' for each of the 4 nations of the UK – a real federal Britain.

And we also think that devolution within England should only go ahead if approved in a referendum in the area in question – at the moment the motion is silent on how this would be approved.

F15 - Food Poverty

LR's view: Vote for amendment and amended motion; otherwise vote against

This motion highlights a real problem but fails in both its analysis of that problem and its proposed solutions to it. The apparent increase in the use of food banks is not simply a result of increasing food poverty, with the coalition's lifting of Labour's ban on referrals to food banks by Jobcentre Plus playing an important role in increasing demand.

We hope the Federal Conference Committee

will take an amendment which gives a much more accurate view of the problem and strengthens the proposed solutions, otherwise we recommend voting against.

F16 - Constitutional Amendment: Conference Representatives

LR's view: vote against

We are very much in favour of One Member One Vote (OMOV) at conference and in elections for Party committees and welcome the consultative session on Saturday lunchtime on this.

In the light of the fact that the Federal Executive are consulting on this, this amendment looks at best premature and at worst an attempt to scupper the move to OMOV.

Even in its own terms it is an odd amendment. Local parties with small numbers of members would be grossly over-represented compared to large parties. A party with 30 members increases its conference reps from 2 to 8, while a party with 400 members only goes from 11 to 16.

On the subject of party democracy, we are intrigued that the FCC declined to take a motion from the FE on all party members electing the Interim Peers Panel. Particularly as this could have been combined with the Presidential election.

We recommend this amendment be rejected.

F18 - In Europe, In work

LR's view: support

We welcome this motion's solid commitment to free trade. Creating one of the biggest single markets in the world is the EU's greatest success, boosting economic growth and employment across the continent.

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