

your community. Liberal Democrats believe in strong communities, where local people can come together to meet local needs, enjoy a pleasant local environment and feel free from the threat of crime.

rebuilding security, opportunity, homes and hope

Liberal Democrats believe in strong communities, where local people can come together to meet local needs, enjoy a pleasant local environment, and feel free from the threat of crime. We want every community to be safe and fair, and offer opportunities to people of every background.

Liberal Democrats in the Scottish Parliament and at this Westminster election are committed to **providing more affordable homes** and protecting people from unfair repossessions. We will protect the identity of local high streets and **keep post offices open**, as well as investing in public transport and **cutting rail fares**. We value Britain's open, welcoming character, and will protect it by **changing the immigration system to make it firm and fair** so people can once again put their faith in it. We will pay for **thousands more police on the beat** across the UK, including 300 more in Scotland. We will **protect and restore our natural environment**.

cutting crime with practical steps

We will focus on what works to cut crime. We support more positive activities for young people, particularly those at risk of offending. Targeted initiatives like this have been shown to cut crime by up to a third in the areas concerned and divert young people from getting into a life of crime. Labour and the Conservatives posture on penalties, which do not deter criminals. What does deter them is increasing the chances of being caught. That is why we need more police on the streets – to provide a longer arm for the law.

Liberal Democrats will pay for 3,000 more police on the beat across the UK, affordable because we are cutting other spending, such as scrapping pointless ID cards. This money will be enough to increase Scottish police numbers by 300 above existing plans.

Liberal Democrats believe that once a criminal has been caught, it is vital that the punishment they are given helps to turn them away from crime, and sets

them back on the straight and narrow. We support rigorously enforced community sentences and restorative justice programmes that make offenders confront their behaviour.

Too many politicians have talked tough, meting out ever-longer prison sentences, but prisons are often, in effect, colleges of crime. As a result, we are spending more and more on prison but those released are even more likely to continue a life of crime.

We will ensure financial resources, police and court time are not wasted on the unnecessary prosecution and imprisonment of drug users and addicts: the focus instead should be on getting addicts the treatment they need. Police should concentrate their efforts on organised drug pushers and gangs.

And we will always base drugs policy on independent scientific advice, which would include making the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs completely independent of government.

We support action to tackle human trafficking, especially in the run-up to the 2014 Commonwealth Games. There have been big increases in human trafficking in the run-up to previous Olympic Games. We support action now to identify and support people being trafficked into Scotland for exploitation, especially women trafficked for sex.



firm and fair immigration system

Britain has always been an open, welcoming country, and thousands of businesses, schools and hospitals in many parts of the country rely on people who've come to live here from overseas. It would be wrong to try and end immigration completely but we have to manage migration so it benefits Britain and is fair for everyone.

The immigration system is in chaos after decades of incompetent management. The Government has failed to plan properly for new migrants, making it harder for people to integrate. We have no idea how many people are here illegally, and we don't even have exit checks at all our ports and airports to ensure people here on temporary visas go home on time.

We will create a fair system that works and promotes integration. We will:

- Immediately reintroduce exit checks at all ports and airports.
- Secure Britain's borders by giving a National Border Force police powers.
- Introduce a regional points-based system to ensure migrants can work only where they are needed. We need to enforce any immigration system through rigorous checks on businesses and a crackdown on rogue employers who profit from illegal labour.
- Focus deportation efforts on criminals by letting law-abiding families earn citizenship. We will allow people who have been in Britain without the correct papers for 10 years, but speak English, have a clean record and want to live here long-term, to earn their citizenship. This route to citizenship will not apply to people arriving after 2010. Deportation targets will be re-focused on criminals and people-traffickers.

a safe haven for those fleeing persecution

Britain has a responsibility to welcome refugees fleeing wars and persecution around the world. Liberal Democrats will abide by Britain's international obligations and restore confidence in the asylum system by making it firm and fair.

We will:

- End the detention of children in immigration detention centres such as the Dungavel centre in Lanarkshire. Alternative systems such as electronic tagging, stringent reporting requirements and residence restrictions can be used for adults in families considered high flight risks.
- Take responsibility for asylum away from the Home Office and give it to a wholly independent agency, as has been successful in Canada.
- Push for a co-ordinated EU-wide asylum system to ensure that the responsibility is fairly shared between member states.
- Allow asylum seekers to work, allowing them the dignity of earning their living instead of having to depend on handouts, and saving taxpayers' money
- End deportations of refugees to countries where they face persecution, imprisonment, torture or execution and end the detention of individuals for whom removal is not possible or imminent, except where there is a significant risk of absconding.

better and more affordable homes

In a fair society, everyone should have the right to a decent home, but this is not the reality of Britain today. There should be quality social and private rented housing available for those who need or choose it. And it should be easy to keep your home warm without harming the environment; British houses are frequently poorly insulated, wasting money and contributing to global warming.

Liberal Democrats will bring 25,000 empty homes back into use in Scotland with cheap loans and grants as part of our job creation plan. If owners take a grant then the home will become available for rent through a housing association.

We will begin a national programme to insulate more homes paid for by the savings from lower energy bills and make it easier to understand the different help available.

We will protect greenfield land and our built heritage by reducing the cost of repairs. We will equalise VAT on new build and repair on an overall revenue neutral basis. It will also help to reduce the costs of repairs to historic buildings.

rail transport you can rely on

Britain needs a well-run, efficient transport system. Public transport is an important part of a fair society and the best way to cut carbon emissions from transport without trying to limit people's opportunities to travel.

We want to improve the experience for the rail traveller and cut carbon emissions. **We will:**

- Cut rail fares, changing contracts with Train Operating Companies in England so that regulated fares fall behind inflation by 1 per cent each year. This will mean a real-terms cut, bringing benefits to Scottish passengers on long distance journeys across the UK.



- Make Network Rail refund a third of your ticket price if you have to take a rail replacement bus service.
- Overhaul Network Rail to put the interests of passengers first and bring it under the UK Freedom of Information Act to make it more open.
- Set up a UK Infrastructure Bank to invest in public transport like High Speed Rail.
- Support High Speed Rail from London to Scotland, with links to the whole of Scotland.

restricting aviation growth

The emissions from rising aviation are a serious problem in the fight against climate change. But in some more remote parts of the country, flights are a vital lifeline, and aviation is important for the economy as a whole. Liberal Democrats

believe we should do all we can to ensure people use alternatives where that makes sense.

We will:

- Replace the per passenger Air Passenger Duty with a Per Plane Duty (PPD), so capturing freight movements by air for the first time.
- Introduce an additional, higher rate of PPD on domestic flights for which alternative, less polluting travel is readily available, maintaining the exemption for lifeline routes.
- Cancel plans for a 3rd runway at Heathrow and any expansion of other airports in the South East of England.

a fair deal for motorists

Our planned expansion of public transport will provide much-needed alternatives to private cars and cut carbon emissions. However, in many places there will always be a need for car travel, so we need to ensure that it is as environmentally friendly as possible. **We will:**

- Work through the EU for a zero emissions target for all new cars by 2040 and extend targets to other vehicles.
- Undertake the preparations for the introduction of a system of road pricing in a second parliament for motorways and dual carriageways. Any such system would be revenue-neutral for motorists, with revenue from cars used to abolish Vehicle Excise Duty and reduce fuel duty, helping those in rural areas who have no alternatives to road travel. Some of the revenue from lorries would be used to fund the extension of High Speed

Rail to Scotland through the UK Infrastructure Bank.

- Introduce a rural fuel discount scheme which would allow a reduced rate of fuel duty to be paid in remote rural areas, as is allowed under EU law.

a fair deal for the countryside

Liberal Democrats are proud that we represent a large part of rural Britain. We believe a fair society is one where people can afford to work and live in the countryside with accessible public services.

Through our policy on Capital Gains Tax we would ensure that those who use second homes as speculative investments would pay tax on enhanced capital value at the same rate as on earned income, not 18 per cent as at present.

We will end the post office closure programme to keep post offices open in rural areas where they're the lynchpin of community life. Our plans for a PostBank will improve access to banking and help secure the future of the Post Office. The work of Liberal Democrats in the Scottish Parliament has secured a new government fund to help post offices diversify and stay in business.

We will refund VAT to mountain rescue services.

a fair deal for farmers

Farming is an important part of Britain's economy, and it is important to Britain's future that we have the capacity to grow the food we need. We will build on that strength and ensure farmers get the fair deal they deserve, able to earn a living wage and also help protect our natural environment and heritage.

Liberal Democrats will create a legal Supermarket Code and a powerful independent regulator of Britain's food market.

We will work within Europe for further reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, while continuing direct support for farmers, especially in upland and less favoured areas. We believe that a greater proportion of that support should be targeted at conservation, the environment and tackling climate change as well as providing food security for a rapidly growing world population. Organic and reduced-input foodstuffs should be encouraged.

Consumers should be helped to choose foods with the least environmental impact, through clearer labelling, and we will work with the EU to make sure country-of-origin labels identify the source of the products, not where they are packaged.

We will use government procurement policy to expand the market for sustainable, fair-traded and locally grown products.

supporting the voluntary sector

As Liberal Democrats we are committed to handing power back to local communities. We believe that society is strengthened by communities coming together and engaging in voluntary activity, which sets people and neighbourhoods free to tackle local problems.

Liberal Democrats will support the voluntary sector by:

- Introducing “easy giving accounts” at publicly-owned banks to allow people to operate charitable giving accounts alongside current accounts.
- Reforming Gift Aid to operate at a single rate of 23 per cent – giving more money to charity while closing a loophole for higher rate taxpayers.