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Fri 8th – Scottish Autumn Conference

10:00 Request to suspend Standing Orders

Motion: 80% pro, 20% con, Motion Carried

Q&A by Party President Mark Pack

Private Business session – see separate document

14:00 SC1: Empowering local authorities and communities

Submitted by: The Scottish Policy Committee

Conference notes:

1) The pivotal contribution of local authorities in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, creating new services for people and businesses, managing financial and practical emergency measures, and providing essential logistical support, staff and facilities to partners including the NHS.

2) The report of the Accounts Commission, Local government in Scotland: Overview 2021, published on 21 May 2021, highlighting the urgent need to address inequalities but that councils operating “in a climate of significant financial uncertainty” is an obstacle to progress.

3) The Accounts Commission further reporting that councils “need the certainty of a multi-year financial settlement”.

4) Current risks to the powers and standing of local authorities and local decision-making include:

(a) The launch of the Scottish Government consultation on a National Care Service on 9 August 2021, running until 18 October 2021, preparing for the centralisation of adult social care services “at a minimum”.

(b) The consideration being given in the course of the National Care Service consultation to “extending its scope to other groups such as children and young people, community justice, alcohol and drug services, and social work”.

(c) The reported lack of engagement with the Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) by the Scottish Government prior to the publication of the consultation, with COSLA describing the additional proposals as potentially “the end for anything other than central control in Scotland” and “an attack on localism and the rights of local people to make decisions democratically for their place”.

(d) The recent strikes in response to Scottish Government-owned Highlands and Islands Airports’ policy to centralise air traffic control services, removing high-skilled jobs from rural and island communities in defiance of both the findings of the retrospective Island Impact Assessment and the wishes of local communities.

(e) The further reliance on ring-fenced funding as a result of the response to the pandemic which has been accompanied by an expansion of the need for local authorities to secure permissions and operate within frameworks set by the Scottish Government.

Conference believes:

1) Local authorities should be recognised as the representative voice of the people at community level, with their own mandate and statutory responsibilities, and should have the powers and resources to act as such and deliver effective and efficient local services.

2) Decisions should be taken as close as possible to the citizen on the principle of subsidiarity because power shared is safer, more flexible and more efficient than power hoarded at either Holyrood or Westminster.

3) Areas which already benefitted from strong local partnership working were better prepared to react to the unprecedented needs created by the COVID-19 pandemic, and that this was reflected in the quality of the service provided to vulnerable people shielding, children learning from home and businesses requiring immediate support.

4) The pandemic, and especially the requirement for people to remain in their local areas, exposed the short-sightedness of centralising services.

5) The budgets of local authorities have been targeted for cuts by the Scottish Government to protect its own spending power and reputation.

6) Since 2007, successive SNP Governments have consistently reduced the influence and power of local authorities and councillors.

7) Scottish Liberal Democrat councillors are champions for their communities, backed by a party that is the strongest supporter of local government in Scotland, localism, subsidiarity and community empowerment.

Conference calls on the Scottish Government to:

1) Deliver reform of adult social care without resorting to putting ever more control in the hands of Scottish ministers, instead improving care with national standards and entitlements for users and by ensuring that the hard work of staff is recognised with a step change in pay and conditions, as endorsed by the Scottish Liberal Democrat Conference in March 2021.

2) Resist using the cloak of a National Care Service to seize sweeping powers from local authorities.

3) Work with local government to establish a fiscal framework, underpinned by new principles including that:

(a) each local authority receive a fair share of Scottish Government resources to enable it to effectively meet the needs of the communities it serves.

(b) the framework encourages and rewards innovation by local authorities as a means to deliver service improvement.

(c) it empowers local authorities to make long-term investments to address challenges including poverty and the climate emergency.

(d) transparency is at its heart, for example publishing each year a clear statement on how settlements for local authorities vary in comparison to other budgets including that of the Scottish Government as a whole.

(e) there should be established and enforceable rules of engagement between the Scottish Government and local authorities, including a new rule to prevent the Scottish Government from making disproportionate cuts to council funding.

(f) multi-year financial settlements are used because one-year funding agreements with the Scottish Government, combined with national policy initiatives accounting for an increasing proportion of

council budgets, are a barrier to service transformation, innovation and the implementation of fair work policies.

(g) it is inappropriate for the government to use financial penalties to exert control over local authorities.

4) Deliver 1) and 3) as part of a new programme of empowerment for local authorities aligned with Scottish Liberal Democrat policies including a full power of general competence, the approval of local policing plans by locally elected people, and enabling local authorities to raise at least half of the money they spend locally backed by powers including the setting of local domestic and business taxation.

Conference further supports the concept of parity of esteem between local and central government and calls for the independence and standing of local authorities to be protected in the constitution of the Federal United Kingdom which Liberal Democrats espouse.

Cards:

Mover: Susan Murray, Policy Committee, called

Eileen McCartin, Paisley, called

Jacque Bell, Edinburgh North East & Leith, called

Carole Ford

Summator: Peter Barrett, Perth

Motion: 100% pro, 0% con, Carried nem con

14:35 EM1: Ending Men's violence against Women and Girls

Submitted by: SLDW

Conference regrets

- 1) The murder of Sarah Everard by a serving Police Officer who was able to abuse his power to detain her unlawfully
- 2) That another 79 women have been killed in acts of violence or in suspicious circumstances since Sarah Everard's murder
- 3) That sexual violence, sexual harassment, and domestic abuse remain endemic in our society. In 2019-20:
 - a. 2,343 of rape and attempted rape and 4936 cases of sexual assault were reported to Police Scotland. This represents a 238% increase since 2010-11
 - b. Police Scotland recorded 62,907 incidents of domestic abuse in 2019-20, an increase of 4% compared to the previous year with 80% of cases involving a female victim and male accused
- 4) That the justice system is failing many victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence:
 - a. Out of the 2343 reported rapes and attempted rapes, only 300 resulted in prosecution and 130 in conviction, a conviction rate of only 5%, comparable to other parts of the UK
 - b. 40% of incidents of domestic abuse recorded by the police in Scotland included the recording of at least one crime or offence
- 5) That UK has failed to ratify the Istanbul Convention, a treaty creating a global framework for protecting women from violence.

Conference believes that:

- I. Everyone, regardless of identity, has the right to live a life free from fear and violence.
 - II. The SNP and UK Governments are failing to properly tackle continuing violence against women and girls in our society.
 - III. Investing in raising awareness, education, and policies aimed at prevention is vital and prevents greater costs long-term.
 - IV. An intersectional approach to violence against women and girls is imperative to provide high level care and support to the most vulnerable victims.
- Disclosures of abuse must be made easier and always be taken seriously by authorities who offer a trauma-informed response.
- VI. Ending violence against women and girls must be a top priority for all levels of government.
 - VII. There should be a review of Police vetting processes and culture in order to minimise the risk of abuse of power. Conference reaffirms the Liberal Democrat commitments to:
 - A. Improve and reform the Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) curriculum, including age-appropriate education on consent from primary school.
 - B. Expand the number of refuge and rape crisis centres, including specialist provision.

C. Give Local Authorities the duty and funding to provide appropriate accommodation and support for survivors of abuse

D. Recognise misogyny as a hate crime.

Conference calls on the Scottish Government to:

1. Increase efforts to prevent and detect violence against women and girls by:

a. Funding an NHS-style public awareness campaign, including on long-lasting trauma impacts.

b. Consulting education leaders and the specialist violence against women and girls sector, to take immediate action on sexual harassment in school.

c. Implementing guidance to include awareness of public sexual harassment and its consequences in the national curriculum.

d. Upskilling all school staff via training to ensure confidence in correctly and sensitively handling disclosures of a sexual or abusive nature.

e. Introducing a duty on public authorities to ensure all frontline staff are trained to detect and respond appropriately to domestic abuse.

f. Establishing a plan to tackle the social recovery of vulnerable and at-risk women and girls following the pandemic.

g. Ensuring the child's safety and needs are put first when decisions are made as to the appropriate level of contact with an abusive parent.

2. Improve outcomes for victims of sexual violence and domestic abuse by:

a. Ensuring migrant women have equal access to protection from abuse.

b. Offering a long-term funding model for specialist services, including specialist BAME and LGBT+ services, so they can plan strategically and fully focus on providing support.

c. Introducing mandatory training for police and those involved in the justice system in understanding the impact of trauma on victims.

d. Improving access to independent legal support for victims, including those with no recourse to public funds.

e. Introducing mandatory awareness training for local authority Children's Services staff to enable them to appropriately examine and record allegations of domestic abuse which may present as parental conflict.

f. Ensuring appropriate support is available for those who do not flee from their abuser.

3. To ensure that the Independent Review Of Equality Matters recommended by Dame Eilish Angiolini's Complaints, Misconduct and Investigations Report is expanded to include a review of vetting processes and consideration of misogynistic behaviour, and that consideration of misogyny is incorporated into the Misconduct Proposals

Consultation due to commence in late 2021.

4. To establish a Commission to look at ways of preventing men's violence against women and girls in all its forms to report within one year in order to ensure a co-ordinated approach across all levels of government.

Conference calls on the UK Government to:

1. Establish the UK as a leader in domestic and global efforts to end violence against women and girls by ratifying the Istanbul Convention as soon as possible.

Cards:

Mover: Caron Lindsay

Beatrice Wishart, Shetland

Stephen Harte,

Summator:

Motion: 96.2% pro, 3.8%con, carried

15:15 SC2: Fair and Flexible Local Taxation

Submitted by: Paisley and Renfrewshire local party

Conference notes that:

1. ~~Of the five parties represented in the Scottish Parliament, only the Conservatives now oppose the principle of replacing Council Tax with a fairer alternative.~~
2. ~~The SNP initially came to power with a highly publicised policy of abolishing Council Tax, and progress on this front is long overdue.~~
3. ~~The Convention of Scottish Local Authorities (COSLA) has called for councils to have greater freedom in adopting the most appropriate system of local taxation for their area.~~

Conference believes that:

1. ~~Enabling local authorities to choose from various forms of local taxation is in line with our party's localist values.~~
2. ~~The upgrade of HMRC's infrastructure to handle Real-Time Information and the residency data requirements of Scottish Rate of Income Tax has established the possibility that they could act as the collection agency for a local income tax, which would save administrative costs for local councils.~~
3. ~~The increased devolution of taxation to Revenue Scotland creates an opportunity for the Scottish Government to enable local authorities to set new discretionary taxes, which merits consideration in any future system of local taxation.~~

Conference calls for:

1. ~~The Scottish Government to immediately restart cross-party talks at Holyrood on the future of local taxation.~~
2. ~~Scottish Liberal Democrat parliamentarians, councillors, and campaigners to advocate the replacement of property-based council tax and non-domestic rates with a flexible system of local taxation, in which local authorities would have the freedom to implement one or more of:~~
 - a. ~~a locally administered land value tax;~~
 - b. ~~a local income tax, with the rate set by local authorities and the collection managed by HMRC;~~
 - c. ~~locally set components of certain taxes that are administered by Revenue Scotland, such as landfill tax.~~

Cards:

Mover: Ross Stalker, Paisley & Renfrewshire

Peter Barrett, Perth

Paul McGarry, Central Scotland

Robert Brown, Rutherglen & Hamilton West

Summator: Eileen McCartin, Paisley & Renfrewshire

Motion: 18% pro, 82% con, defeated

15:45 EM2: Crisis in Adult Social Care

Submitted by: SLDW

Conference regrets:

- 1) Glasgow Health and Social Care Partnership's decision to suspend day care services for three weeks because of low staffing levels in social care.
- 2) HSCPs in Lanarkshire asking families and friends to take on caring responsibilities for those in need.
- 3) Vulnerable people are having care packages withdrawn at very little notice across NHS Lothian because of a shortage of care staff.
- 4) The doubling of Whole Time Equivalent Vacancy Rates in the social care sector between 2017 and 2019 as outlined in the Scottish Social's most recent Staff Vacancies in Care Services report and notes that this was before the effects of Brexit and the Covid-19 pandemic.
- 5) Growing inequalities in the social care sector as those who can afford it can pay for care from agencies who are too expensive for local authorities to use.
- 6) The particular challenges of recruiting carers in rural areas with inadequate public transport.
- 7) Funds available to those needing care for self directed support are insufficient to provide necessary care.
- 8) Local authorities have lost numbers of qualified assessment staff, including specialist Hospital Social Workers through changes in models of working practice and staff burn out.
- 9) The decision by the City of Edinburgh Council to close care homes and turn one into an assessment centre rather than create a new facility for that purpose.
- 10) The decision of the UK Government to hike tax in a way that disproportionately impacts those on low and middle incomes, with House of Commons Library analysis commissioned by Liberal Democrats showing that the increase in national insurance to fund health and social care will cost the average NHS worker more than £300 a year.

Conference notes:

The report published on 1st October by Biggar Economics and Enable Scotland which states that the social care sector contribute £5.1 billion and 297,020 jobs.

Conference believes:

- 1) That any individual who requires care should receive the appropriate service to enable them to remain in their own home for as long as possible. Once staying at home is not possible they should be able to access a quality care home setting close to their friends and family.
- 2) That access to quality care appropriate to the assessed needs of the individual is a human right.
- 3) That adequate and rapid provision of social care packages enables timely discharge from hospital and reduces strain on secondary NHS care.
- 4) That the SNP Policy of Reshaping the Balance of Care is failing. Hundreds of hospital beds and care home places have closed without ensuring the appropriate provision of care in the community services.

5) That Covid and Brexit have added to the strains on social care services brought about by poor implementation of the policy.

6) That assessment/ budgetary approval processes have become more cumbersome since the introduction of self directed support leading to a slowing of the discharge process. At the same time even when assessments are completed there may be no appropriate service available to facilitate discharge.

7) That social care which meets national standards should continue to be commissioned by commissioners of service.

8) That any funds which come to Scotland as a result of the National Insurance increase should be directed to improving social care.

Conference calls for:

1) The UK Government to include care workers in skilled worker visas for as long as required.

2) The Scottish Government to provide funding for the immediate recruitment of care workers to be paid at least the Living Wage with no zero hours contracts.

3) A rapid training initiative to ensure that newly recruited carers have the skills to carry out their duties safely.

4) Care home closures as announced in Edinburgh and the Lothians to cease.

5) No further hospital bed closures. Funding to be made available for the continuation of hospital care in smaller communities rather than centralisation.

6) The Scottish Government to develop a longer-term strategy for the recruitment and retention of a highly skilled work social care workforce with good pay and conditions, professional recognition and career progression.

7) Investment in additional qualified assessment staff.

8) Assessment and budget access processes to be simplified.

9) Changes in local authority care service tendering processes with a view to consideration of quality as well as price.

10) Further funding for commissioners to enable them to commission services from a wider range of agencies.

11) Funds to be made available to agencies in rural areas to meet the costs of carers'

Cards:

Mover/Summator: Jacqueline Bell, Edinburgh North East and Leith - called

Iain Smith, North East Fife – called

Caron Lindsay, West Lothian

Motion: 100% pro, 0% con, carried nem con

16:20 SC3: Scotland's Drug Death Emergency

Submitted by: Central Scotland Liberal Democrats

Conference Notes:

1. That that 1339 people died as a result of drug use in Scotland last year, representing another devastating record in Scotland's in drug use mortality figures.
2. That Scotland has the highest drug death rate in Europe.
3. That Scotland's drug use mortality rate is nearly 4 times of any other country in the rest of the UK.
4. The SNP government's budget cut of 22% to Alcohol and Drug partnerships in 2015 and 2016 saw services go to the wall and severed vital relationships between workers and users.
5. That despite changing rhetoric around the subject, drug use is still treated as a criminal justice issue rather than one of public health with many people at risk of drug-related death and people caught in possession for personal use being sent to prison rather than treatment or education.
6. Statistics published on 14 September showing 722 suspected drug deaths during the first half of 2021, putting Scotland on a trajectory to match the devastation recorded in 2020.

Conference believes:

1. Every life lost to drugs is a tragedy and that the SNP government have shown themselves wholly unequal to addressing this particularly Scottish problem.
2. That the SNP are wrong to suggest that our disproportionately high death rates in this area are a result of any UK wide factors, on the basis that were that the case, Scotland's death rate would be more aligned with the other UK nations.
3. Scotland's drug death emergency now represents a public health crisis which demands political focus, innovation and resources.
4. That we should seek to emulate international best practice in treating this as a public health emergency, diverting people into treatment or education instead of prison.

Conference resolves:

1. To hold government ministers to account at every opportunity on this devastating crisis.
2. To build a cross party consensus on a radical new approach to the problem.
3. To continue to press for this to be treated as a public health issue, where people at risk of drug-related death and people caught in possession for personal use are diverted into treatment or education rather than criminal justice, with fast access to support and comprehensive services for them and their families wherever and whenever this is required.
4. To support measures which are designed to improve public safety, including calling for the further acceleration of training, awareness raising and rollout of naloxone, the provision of environments and equipment to provide safer conditions for the consumption of drugs, and further investment in drug testing to make it widely accessible and available - all with the purpose of reducing morbidity and mortality.
5. To support the request for the World Health Organisation to send a taskforce of global experts on drug mortality to help get this public health disaster under control.

Cards:

Mover: Alex Cole-Hamilton, called

Joe McCauley, called

Caron Lindsay, called

Ben Lawrie, called

Fraser Graham, called

Summator: Wendy Chamberlain, called

Motion: 96% pro, 4% con, carried

17:00 Fringes

18:00 In Conversation with Kirsty Williams and Christine Jardine MP

Sat 9th - Joint Conference with Welsh Liberal Democrats

09:40 Standing Orders for Joint conference

Motion: 100%pro, 0%con, carried nem.con.

10:00 Panel 1: A Liberal UK in 2030 - Local Government and Electoral systems

Cllr Kevin Lang, Edinburgh

Cllr Jo Watkins, Monmouthshire

Cllr Bob Kilminster, Pembrokeshire

10:40 Speech by Naomi Long MLA

10:50 Topical Debate 1: School qualifications – how should achievement be measured?

The Covid pandemic has caused serious disruption to education, resulting in the cancellation of external examinations in both 2020 and 2021. A level, Higher and Advanced Higher qualifications have been awarded largely on the basis of teacher grades, moderated, or not, by algorithms, evidence of pupil performance or in-school and cross-school scrutiny. It is fair to say that the resulting significant improvement in final grades has been met with scepticism, delight or dismay, depending on individual attitudes to both the examinations themselves, and the purpose they serve.

Examination systems have developed over time. The current systems in both Scotland and Wales have changed in numerous small ways – additional subjects, the introduction of more practical or investigative elements, length of exams and specific nature of questions, but the final awards are largely unchanged, and the importance of an externally examined element has remained, relatively unchallenged. The cancellation of exams has changed this. In educational circles, and in the wider public, fundamental questions are now being asked about the nature of end of school assessments and qualifications.

As Liberal Democrats, where do we stand on the fundamental questions?

What are school qualifications for? Are they to acknowledge individual achievement or enable the selection process for universities, colleges, training providers or employers? Are they to provide the starting point for future study or a more general measure of ability? Are these aims mutually exclusive?

Do we need examinations at the end of each of the final three years of school education, or is one set in the final year enough? And should we assess only curriculum content or the wider

aspects of education associated with active citizenship – confidence, responsibility, contributing to the community?

Which is paramount, the fairness associated with examination conditions and independent marking or the more comprehensive knowledge of the teacher? Should the needs of less advantaged students influence the assessment system? Are these contradictory aims?

Should the frailties of human nature be a consideration? Do examinations have a motivating impact on young people? Is it possible to eliminate bias from teacher grades? Can we eliminate ‘teaching to the test’?

How important is public confidence in the awards system? Would the public trust a system based entirely on teacher grades? Is it possible to quality assure standards between teachers and between schools?

If the pandemic has opened up the opportunity for fresh thinking, what do liberals think about assessment and qualifications? How should we shape policy?

The education system is fundamental to the prosperity of individuals and to society as a whole. It influences the nature of society and the quality of life. How do we make the assessment system fit for the young people it serves?

Cards:

Carole Ford

Luka Alam

Willie Rennie

Paul McGarry

Jane Dodds

[11:45 Speech by Sir Ed Davey](#)

[12:00 Panel 2: A Liberal UK in 2030 Healthcare in Scotland and Wales](#)

[12:45 Lunch](#)

[12:55 Fringes](#)

[14:00 Speech by Jane Dodds MS](#)

[14:20 Topical Debate 2: A vision for Scotland and Wales](#)

This Joint Conference of the Scottish and Welsh Liberal Democrats notes that:

1. Our political system has failed to hold Governments across the United Kingdom accountable, and has increasingly failed to provide: political, social or economic fairness for our country and our citizens; competence, probity or trust in our leaders; and public confidence in the institutions of our democracy

2. The lives of too many people are scarred by poverty incomes, poor health and lifestyles, lack of economic and personal opportunity and housing challenges

3. Longstanding structural economic imbalances between the richer and poorer parts of the United Kingdom have been made worse by neo-conservative economic theories, and over-reliance on a few sectors such as financial services

4. The international standing of the United Kingdom has been damaged by the populism, disdain for the Rule of Law and international treaties, poor relations with other world leaders and the cuts in international aid which have marked the tenure of the current Conservative Government.

Our vision is of a country where wellbeing is underpinned by a vibrant economy based on enterprise and fair employment practices. We wish to see a society where security and respect is afforded to all residents regardless of background, supported by a fair and clear

way of paying for investment that includes taxing wealth and property. We wish to see a country founded on environmental sustainability where the journey to zero carbon is characterised by a just transition. We believe in self-government for Scotland and Wales within a Federal UK, within the EU, and within the wider international community.

To implement this vision, conference asserts that:

1. The constitutional structure of the United Kingdom requires fundamental reform to enable it to serve the needs of Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the regions of England in the future.

2. Such reform must be based on principles of federalism, partnership, fairness, mutual respect, subsidiarity and the establishment of a written constitution

3. The aims and purpose of the United Kingdom, and its nations and regions, should be set out in a Federation Agreement, embodying a social contract that ensures:

a. the delivery of personal liberty, opportunity, physical and economic security, environmental sustainability, and justice for all our citizens;

b. the fair taxation of income and wealth and closure of the loopholes which meantime permit massive tax avoidance;

c. the sustainable delivery of high class public services;

d. rapid movement towards environmental sustainability and net zero targets in a way that spreads the costs of this fairly;

e. Respect for diversity and creativity;

f. investment wherever necessary to raise education, early years provision and parenting skills to levels where functional illiteracy and innumeracy are eliminated and aspirations flourish; and

g. enhancement of the dignity and wellbeing of individuals and their right to develop their talents to the full

4. The economy is a means to shared prosperity rather than an end in itself, social justice should be central to how it operates and a broader concept of civic capitalism should underpin our economic strategy;

5. One of the core missions of Liberalism should be to harness the power of the State for the benefit of those most disadvantaged in society, and to ensure that each individual has an equal chance to realise his or her own potential.

6. The Scottish and Welsh Parties have a particular duty to use their powers to the fullest extent to widen the life chances of the poorest and most disadvantaged people in Scotland and Wales. They should seek and campaign for political, economic and democratic reforms that enhance the public good, wellbeing and constitutional standing of Scotland and Wales.

7. Scotland and Wales are best served by the UK being in the European Economic Area (EEA), re-joining the Single Market immediately, and the European Union at the first practical opportunity (recognising the need for sustained public support for this).

Conference notes that the Scottish and Welsh Parties are both developing their future strategies and believes that these should aim:

- to develop and maintain a broad, radical centre-left political strategy for our parties, enabling the Liberal Democrats and Liberalism to exert growing influence in local, national and federal government;
- to use the vision set out in this motion as the basis for a distinctive narrative which supports all of our campaigning;
- to campaign for, and to build, wide civic and political support for a federal partnership between the nations and regions of the United Kingdom as the lynchpin of much-needed constitutional reform;
- to identify the groups of voters most likely to be attracted by our message, and demonstrate clearly how radical Liberal policies can benefit our people;
- to use the Scottish and Welsh Parliament voting systems more effectively, targetting the Regional List votes of electors some of whom may have supported another party with their constituency vote
- to apply all of this in our approach to forthcoming Council elections, which are important in themselves and a crucial staging post towards the next Holyrood and Senedd elections; and
- to refocus our mission, campaigning in all our communities for Liberal Democracy and individual and community empowerment.

Cards:

Robert Brown
 Fred Mackintosh
 Margot Kerr
 Neil Schofield Hughes
 Wendy Chamberlain
 Conrad Wood
 Simon Mundy
 Lim Macmillan
 Austen Reid
 Nigel Lindsay

[15:10 fundraiser](#)

[15:15 Speech by Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP](#)

[15:35 JCC1: COP26](#)

Submitted by: The Scottish Policy Committee

Conference notes:

1. The UK will host the 26th UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26) in Glasgow on 31 October - 12 November 2021 and its goals on mitigation, adaptation, finance and collaboration.
2. The findings of the Sixth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (the IPCC), warning of a “code red for humanity” with evidence of the irrefutable link between human emissions and catastrophic environmental impacts.
3. The Paris Agreement commits countries to limiting temperature rises to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels, while pursuing efforts to limit it to 1.5°C, but that the world has already warmed by 1.1°C degrees.

4. Emissions reductions in both Scotland and Wales have not been distributed evenly across sectors. Both achieved significant emissions reductions through decarbonising power and the closure of coal-fired power stations, but this has served to mask a complete absence of progress in other areas such as transport where emissions remain stubbornly high and virtually unchanged since 1990 levels.

Conference believes:

1. That the scale of action in both Scotland and Wales has been insufficient and that the urgency of the twin climate and nature emergencies must compel the Scottish and Welsh Governments to rapidly accelerate their responses.

2. Both Scottish and Welsh governments hold power over key policy levers such as agriculture, tree planting, waste management, buildings efficiency, public transport and active travel, and that without radical policy reform in these areas the ambition of Net Zero will be unreachable.

Conference calls on the Scottish and Welsh governments to:

1. Rapidly accelerate the decarbonisation of those sectors that have recorded little or no emissions reduction targets since 1990.

2. Establish routemaps with milestones for sectors to ensure that each plays their full part in achieving targets for net zero.

3. Sense check all future policy commitments in light of the climate and nature emergencies, and in recognition of the gravity and urgency of the situations.

4. Commit to calls 1-3 in advance of COP26.

Cards:

Sanne Dykstra-Downie, Edinburgh North and Leith, called

Jane Dodds, Leader Welsh Lib Dems, called

Jacqui Bell, Edinburgh North East & Leith

Elaine Ford, Edinburgh North and Leith, called

Thomas Pragg, Highlands, called

Jacky Charlton, Brecon & Radnor, called

David Mackenzie, Kelvinside, called

Liam McArthur, Orkney, called

Motion: 94.9% pro, 5.1% con, carried

16:20 Panel 3: A Liberal UK in 2030

What does the UK look like for state parties?

17:30 Fringes

18:30 In Conversation with Willie Rennie MSP