

Motions: Autumn 2020

Defending and Advancing Local Democracy

Proposer: Andrew Haldane

Summator: Iain Donaldson

- 1) Conference welcomes Motion F17 passed at Autumn 2020 Conference; Opposing the Government 'Power Grab' on Planning"
- 2) Conference notes with concern the continuing piecemeal process, in this region and elsewhere, toward unitary authorities and imposed elected mayors together with the threat of a major rationalisation of local government in England, potentially involving significant reductions in the numbers of councillors, without electoral reform or the application of the principle of subsidiarity to local government structures.
- 3) Conference re-asserts its belief that citizens' access to local councillors embedded in their communities and with the power to exert influence on their behalf is a fundamental building block of our democracy.
- 4) Conference recognises the opportunity to rationalise local government structures in England, but view with concern opportunity this provides for this process to be conducted in ways which confer partisan advantage while also diluting and undermining the influence exerted by dedicated local councillors on behalf of those they represent. Any diminution in the numbers of councillors exacerbates the iniquity of first past the post elections reducing the number of alternative and independent voices challenging large majorities won on a minority vote.
- 5) Conference believes that the time has now come when every part of England should enjoy the same level of devolved power and that the principle of subsidiarity should apply when allocating responsibilities within local government tiers.
- 6) Conference therefore calls for;
 - a) The immediate restitution of Local Authority powers over planning matters.
 - b) A moratorium on the introduction of Unitary Authorities until the following measures can be applied to local government provision in England;
 - i) The adoption of Single Transferable Vote for all local government elections in England.
 - ii) Local Government Boundaries Commission oversight of proposed changes. This should include; providing guidance and an appeals process for the revision of Ward boundaries, ensuring that unitary authority wards do not bisect town/parish wards boundaries and recommendations as to the appropriate ratio of councillors to population addressing such issues as relatively scattered populations in rural areas.
 - iii) A uniform entitlement to devolution to be applied throughout England adopting a levelling up process which ensures that no existing authority loses any of its devolved powers and that, in future, all parts of England move in step as devolution progresses.
 - iv) Reforms to include enhanced powers for all English parish/town councils, to be conferred before any new structure involving higher tiers is implemented. This would include town/parish councils taking primary responsibility for planning controls within their Neighbourhood Plan ar-

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ea and accepting responsibility for such matters as speed limits, traffic management, car park management and other parking controls with the provision of sufficient funding to parish/town councils to enable effective execution of these powers.

- v) Where parish/town councils are too small to exercise greater responsibilities all councillors within a small cluster of such councils should serve on a Rural District Council which would exercise the newly devolved powers while the representatives of any parish or town within the RDC retain full responsibility for exercising their existing powers.
- vi) Ownership of publicly owned assets situated within each town and parish boundaries, such as car parks other land and buildings should be transferred to the relevant town or parish council, with the exception of buildings or other assets used for the purposes of the higher tier authority's operations.
- vii) No imposition of elected mayors.
- viii) Model service level agreements for the provision by unitary authorities of accommodation and human resource management for local government officers administering services on behalf of town/
- ix) An all-party Commission to develop a sustainable model for raising and allocating local government funding informed by advice from a Citizens Assembly and comparable forums comprised of councillors and local government officers. .

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Beveridge 2.0. A Brighter Future for Health and Social Care.

Proposer: Peter Jackson

Summator: Andrew Haldane

1. Conference expresses its deepest sympathy to all those who have lost loved ones during the Coronavirus pandemic and thank all those who put their personal health and safety at risk to maintain essential services. We commend all those involved in NHS and Social Care services, under-resourced to confront a crisis exacerbated by government mismanagement, without whose remarkable skill and dedication the consequences of the pandemic could have been unimaginably worse.

2. Conference recognises that

a. The tragic loss of life among those receiving residential home or domiciliary social care and their carers was exacerbated by years of government inaction, neglect, and inadequate funding

b. While maintaining pressure for achieving parity of esteem for Mental Health Services, and for NHS improvements across the board, the time for radical measures to improve Social care provision, its status, funding, remuneration and professional training structures and for effective integration of Health and Social Care is long overdue.

c. Pre-pandemic Government plans to grow Social Care funding by £1bn per year are insufficient even to maintain an inadequate status-quo at a time when the financial position of both large and small care providers is extremely precarious.

d. Decisions taken now on the future of Health and Social Care will impact for many years beyond the current parliament. For this reason, all the main political parties, and all stakeholders, should be engaged in designing an enduring strategic framework and funding settlement.

e. The government has no mandate for a possible sell-out of Health and Social Care in a US trade deal, which is unacceptable to the British people. Contractual or political arrangements around such a deal potentially undermine voters' fundamental democratic right to vote to reverse such a decision at the next election.

f. Local Authorities knowledge and expertise of Social Care provision and local community needs uniquely equips them to co-ordinate work with Trusts and CCGs in their area to establish better integration of Health and Social Care.

g. The importance of effective support for the estimated 6.5 million "informal carers", i.e. family and friends providing unpaid social care.

h. The sense of unfairness felt by self-funders obliged to pay higher fees than they should to subsidise Local Authorities who cannot cover the full cost their Social Care placements (an estimated £12,532 per annum, Just Group 2019).

3. Conference condemns ;

Six years of Government failure to;

a. Respond to persistent Liberal Democrat calls for a cross-party Health and Social Care Commission to develop an enduring long-term strategy (a New Beveridge).

b. Act on the Dilnot Report, implement the 2014 Care Act, or produce alternative proposals. As a consequence those who in future may need long-term residential care still fear losing their savings or their home.

c. Address the scale of the funding challenge as highlighted in the Health Foundation/IFS/NHS Confederation report *Securing the Future* (2019) which estimates that:

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- i. To provide a modernised NHS would require £7.5bn more by 2023/24 than the Government's current NHS long term plan.
- ii. There is a further £12bn shortfall in funding for Social Care to restore previous service levels and improve staff remuneration.
- iii. Providing personal care free at the point of need, would require a further £8bn in funding by 2023/24

4. Conference welcomes:

- a. The passing at 2020 Autumn Conference for Policy motions F5 "Improve Mental Health Support for Health and Care Staff", F7 "The nature of Public During COVID-19", F12 "The government's response to the COVID-19 Pandemic" and F21 "A Green Recovery from the COVID-19 Pandemic"
- b. The visionary views expressed at our autumn conference with notable contributions from our leader and our Health and Social Care spokesperson, including calls for;
 - i. A Public Enquiry into the pandemic so that the resilience and capacity of the health and social care system can be embedded in future strategic planning.
 - ii. The leaders of the other parties to work with us to establish a cross party process to develop a future strategy for Health and Social Care provision underpinned by a sustainable funding model that address current underfunding and future challenges.

5. Conference calls for:

A distinctive Liberal Democrat input to cross-party working on the development of a coherent strategy to provide future stability and resilience based upon;

- a. Addressing the current under-resourcing of Health and Social Care.
- b. Drawing fully on the expertise of a broad range Health and Social professionals, including practitioners and researchers, with the aim of establishing an enduring blueprint for future provision (Beveridge 2.0)
- c. Due recognition of the views of users of our NHS and Social Care system, elicited via a Citizen's Assembly process.
- d. Recognition of the continuing relevance of the Dilnot report and the 2014 Care Act to deliberations on a future framework.
- e. The need to address improved salary structures for Health and Social Care professionals with particular reference to ensuring that social care workers are fairly remunerated.
- f. Improved training structures for the Social Care profession so that its dedicated members are better equipped to perform their duties and have improved career pathways.
- g. The establishment of a professional body for care workers comparable to the Royal College of Nursing.
- h. Ensuring long-term financial stability for our Health and Social Care service through a new hypothecated health and care tax.
- i. A new National Social Care Service to be administered by local authority managed Health and Wellbeing Boards tasked with co-ordinating local care provision, and its interface with local NHS services.

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Motion: Future Politician Access Fund

Proposer: Andy Corkhill, Wirral

Summator: tbc

Conference notes that the greatest barrier for too many people in our party is not having the funding to commit to the necessary endeavours needed to become selected and elected to local and national government.

Conference believes that the reason newly elected Members of Parliament and Local Councillors – from all parties – are disproportionately older, wealthier and from a white ethnic background is because people from those groups are more likely to have the ability to dedicate themselves to politics without the worry of spending money and using their own time to get selected and elected.

Inclusivity is a key liberal value and whilst we fight for equality for all our members and for our constituents, we currently don't allow the opportunity for equality internally within our party when it comes to selection and election of candidates.

Conference believes that money should not be a barrier to the Liberal Democrats electing the best politicians.

Conference also notes the lack of ethnic diversity in the Liberal Democrats, something that has also been noted by successive leaders, Presidents and internal reviews. A party which draws its selected and elected members from a wide range of diverse candidates is stronger and offers a wider set of opinions, values and philosophies.

Conference fears that we are losing some insightful, unique, and diverse opinions, philosophies and human beings. People that cannot even begin to imagine a career in politics because they have no way of getting their foot on the ladder. It is not good enough for us to say that they must want it enough to sacrifice certain things. That is not fair, and that is not liberal. Equality of opportunity does not always lead to equality of outcome.

Conference calls for the implementation of a 'Future Politician Access Fund' which will allow our members to access money which they can use to further their political careers through training, travel or working on behalf of the Liberal Democrats apropos of getting selected and elected to public office. This will result in reducing the very often unseen out of pocket expenses and allow many more members to seek candidacy. This way we can involve more people, with a wider and more diverse range of backgrounds.

Funding will be made available via the local and regional party, with a panel of members deciding on applications from individuals based on a criteria to be decided by local and regional executives at a future point in time. All funding will be monitored and tracked, and must be used in the pursuit of selection to candidacy, and election to public office.