



AUTUMN CONFERENCE 2014



ABERYSTWYTH - 15 NOVEMBER
MOTIONS PASSED



Policy Motions

PM1. Effective and Accountable Local Government

National Policy Committee

Original Motion

Conference Notes:

1. The preamble to the Liberal Democrat constitution, which articulates our commitment to the “promotion of a flourishing system of democratic local government in which decisions are taken and services delivered at the most local level which is viable.”
2. The financial pressures faced by local government in Wales over the next few years and the challenge of maintaining and improving appropriate public services.
3. The widespread disconnection of the public from all levels of government, the unrepresentative demographic profile of councillors, low turnouts in local government elections, and the arrogant attitude of some councils in Wales towards issues of transparency and accountability.
4. The recommendations of the Williams Commission, including proposals to force the amalgamation of principal councils in Wales according to a single pattern and without public consultation, and the Labour Welsh Government’s intention to implement these recommendations.
5. That most contributions to a consultation session at the Welsh Liberal Democrat Spring Conference and to consultation meetings with Welsh Liberal Democrat councillors and activists strongly opposed the Williams proposals and indicated support for strengthening the community tier of government.

Conference Believes:

1. That power should be exercised at the lowest level compatible with effective action and democratic control.
2. That local government in Wales is in need of reform to ensure that it is effective and accountable, which may include the merger of some councils, but that the creation of new councils should have the consent of local people and reflect meaningful areas.
3. That the reorganization of principal councils in the form proposed by the Williams Report would not address the needs of local government in Wales, and does not have the support of the people of Wales.
4. That alternative proposals for the restructuring of local government in Wales need to be developed through public consultation, with the overall aim of moving local government closer to the people whilst also facilitating appropriate strategic governance and cost-effective service delivery.
5. That large-scale reorganisation, which inevitably causes disruption and hinders longer-term planning of services, is not best carried out in periods of the most acute financial pressures.
6. That the economic, social and geographical diversity of Wales means that there is no ‘one-size-fits-all’ solution for local government, and that different models of local government may be appropriate in different parts of Wales.
7. That the opportunity needs to be taken to reconsider who delivers key services at a local level and that this should include considering the further devolution of powers and functions from the Welsh Assembly to principal councils, and from principal councils to lower-tier councils.
8. That moving local government closer to the people requires the strengthening of the community tier of government in Wales, but that the capacity of community and town councils to assume a greater role in an effective and accountable manner varies greatly.

9. That a more strategic approach to planning and economic development in the Cardiff city-region is required to enable it to compete effectively with successful city-regions across Europe.
10. That significant reform to Council Tax is required in order to ensure a fair system for the people of Wales, as well as a revenue stream for local councils to provide good quality public services.
11. That the overall effect of local government reorganization should be to reduce the total number of councillors in Wales, and that action needs to be taken to increase the diversity of backgrounds from which councillors are drawn to be more reflective of the population of Wales.

Conference Endorses the Welsh Liberal Democrats Policy Paper *Effective and Accountable Local Government*.

Conference Resolves:

1. To reject the specific proposals of the Williams Report for the reorganisation of principal councils in Wales.
2. To support the development of alternative proposals for the restructuring of local government in Wales that will balance the interests of effective strategic management and service delivery with local accountability, and which have demonstrable public consent.
3. To empower principal councils to voluntarily agree to amalgamate through a majority vote of members of both authorities, and subject to ratification by the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission.
4. In all other parts of Wales, to ask the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission to review the structure of principal local government, including public consultation, and to bring forward proposals for the reorganization of principal councils based on principles of efficiency, accountability and fit with meaningful geographical areas.
5. To strengthen the community tier of government, by empowering accredited community and town councils to play a greater role in decision-making and local service delivery, and by combining smaller community councils into larger cantref councils, covering meaningful areas, with an enhanced capacity to act.
6. To empower local communities in areas that do not currently have a community or town council, by promoting mechanisms for establishing new local councils, and by enabling appropriate community and neighbourhood associations to register as eligible bodies for the delegated management of some council services and statutory consultation on planning applications and other specified issues.
7. To transfer responsibility for local regeneration schemes to community, town or cantref councils to ensure appropriate local accountability.
8. To reform national park authorities by introducing directly elected members, to ensure that the conservation of nationally important natural and cultural environments is balanced with local accountability and sustainable economic activity.
9. To support the model for council tax reform set out in Gerald Holtham's paper, *Taxation for Wales*, and to conduct a review of the banding structure in Wales in order to develop a fair and sustainable revenue source for councils.
10. That members of principal councils should be elected through the single transferable vote in multi-member wards (or, exceptionally, by the alternative vote in single-member wards in some low-density rural areas).

11. To require all councils to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment of their structures, meeting schedules, standing orders and working practices to ensure that no social group are unfairly disadvantaged in their ability to serve as a councillor.
12. To run a promotional campaign to encourage community and town councils to use their power to co-opt non-voting youth representatives, and to encourage all councils to engage more closely with local youth councils.

Amendments to Motion

NB Amendments 1 to 7 were accepted into the substantive motion as drafting amendments by the movers of the motion

Amendment 1

Welsh Liberal Democrat Group in the National Assembly for Wales

In Conference Believes 9, add after 'Cardiff city-region' the words 'and Swansea city-region'.

Amendment 2

Welsh Liberal Democrat Group in the National Assembly for Wales

In Conference Believes 10, add after 'significant reform to Council Tax' the words 'and business rates'.

Amendment 3

Welsh Liberal Democrat Group in the National Assembly for Wales

In Conference Resolves 3, delete "and subject to ratification by the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission" and replace with "and subject to public consultation, review by the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission and approval by the Welsh Government on receipt of a clear and acceptable business case, costings and a viable corporate plan for the new authority".

Amendment 4

Welsh Liberal Democrat Group in the National Assembly for Wales

In Conference Resolves 5, replace from "and by combining" to the end with: "and by tasking the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission to merge smaller community councils into larger cantref councils, covering meaningful areas, with an enhanced capacity to act and have the capacity to take on local services."

Amendment 5

Rhondda Cynon Taf Liberal Democrats

In Conference Resolves 6, delete all after "promoting mechanisms for establishing new local councils."

Amendment 6

Welsh Liberal Democrat Group in the National Assembly for Wales

In Conference Resolves 7, after "cantref council" insert: "where they have the capacity and capability to deliver them".

Amendment 7

Welsh Liberal Democrat Group in the National Assembly for Wales

Add a new Conference Resolves 10, and renumber accordingly:

"10. To review the system of business rates in Wales so as to remove built in disincentives for business expansion, such review to include consideration of Land Value Taxation." .

Amendment 8

IR Cymru

Insert a new Conference Notes 4 and renumber accordingly:

- “4. The introduction of individual voter registration presents both an opportunity for wider engagement and the possibility that many will be left off the register and will be left without a voice in their local communities.”

Amendment 9

Wrexham and Clwyd South Liberal Democrats

In Conference Believes 11, replace “should be to reduce the total number of councillors in Wales, and that action needs to be taken to increase the diversity of backgrounds” with “should re- evaluate the current electoral wards in Wales through the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission, and that measures need to be outlined to encourage a greater diversity of backgrounds.”

Amendment 10

Wrexham and Clwyd South Liberal Democrats

In Conference Resolves 3, replace “of both authorities,” with “from each authority,”.

Amendment 11

Rhondda Cynon Taf Local Party

Delete Conference Resolves 7 and replace with:

- “7. Strengthen the role of community, town or cantref councils in relation to local regeneration schemes to ensure appropriate local accountability.”

Amendment 12

IR Cymru

Insert new Conference Resolves 8 and renumber accordingly:

- “8. To ensure that Local Authorities have the resources and responsibility for engaging people in Voter Registration, following the introduction of Individual Voter Registration, ensuring that people have a voice in their communities.”

Amendment 13

Welsh Liberal Democrat Group in the National Assembly for Wales

Delete Conference Resolves 9 and replace with:

- “9. To actively consider the model for council tax reform and other taxes set out in Gerald Holtham’s paper, Taxation for Wales, so as to produce an equitable local taxation system that is fair, affordable and which makes provision for those least able to pay.

Amendment 14

Welsh Liberal Democrat Group in the National Assembly for Wales

In Conference Resolves 10, delete the words: “(or, exceptionally, by the alternative vote in single-member wards in some low-density rural areas)”.

Amendment 15

Welsh Liberal Democrat Group in the National Assembly for Wales

Insert at end of Conference Resolves 11, “after each set of local council elections.”

Amendment 16

Welsh Liberal Democrat Group in the National Assembly for Wales

In Conference Resolves 12, insert after “non-voting youth representatives,” the words “legislate to enable principal authorities to do this” after .

Amendment 17

Submitted: IR Cymru

Insert at end of Conference Resolves point 13:

“and establish Youth Councils where they do not already exist.”

Decisions of Conference

Amendments 8, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16 and 17 were accepted into the substantive motion during the debate

There was a request for a reference back submitted. The vote to hear the request failed by 21 votes against to 10 in favour.

There was a separate vote to include Amendment 4. It was included by a vote of 21 in favour to 4 against.

Amendment 9 was carried by a vote of 17 to 12.

Amendment 11 was carried by a vote of 19 to 12.

Amendment 14 was carried by a vote of 18 to 16.

The motion as amended by amendments 1-16 was carried by a vote of 35 to 3.

Motion as Passed

Conference Notes:

1. The preamble to the Liberal Democrat constitution, which articulates our commitment to the “promotion of a flourishing system of democratic local government in which decisions are taken and services delivered at the most local level which is viable.”
2. The financial pressures faced by local government in Wales over the next few years and the challenge of maintaining and improving appropriate public services.
3. The widespread disconnection of the public from all levels of government, the unrepresentative demographic profile of councillors, low turnouts in local government elections, and the arrogant attitude of some councils in Wales towards issues of transparency and accountability.
4. The introduction of individual voter registration presents both an opportunity for wider engagement and the possibility that many will be left of the register and will be left without a voice in their local communities.
5. The recommendations of the Williams Commission, including proposals to force the amalgamation of principal councils in Wales according to a single pattern and without public consultation, and the Labour Welsh Government’s intention to implement these recommendations.
6. That most contributions to a consultation session at the Welsh Liberal Democrat Spring Conference and to consultation meetings with Welsh Liberal Democrat councillors and activists strongly opposed the Williams proposals and indicated support for strengthening the community tier of government.

Conference Believes:

1. That power should be exercised at the lowest level compatible with effective action and democratic control.

2. That local government in Wales is in need of reform to ensure that it is effective and accountable, which may include the merger of some councils, but that the creation of new councils should have the consent of local people and reflect meaningful areas.
3. That the reorganization of principal councils in the form proposed by the Williams Report would not address the needs of local government in Wales, and does not have the support of the people of Wales.
4. That alternative proposals for the restructuring of local government in Wales need to be developed through public consultation, with the overall aim of moving local government closer to the people whilst also facilitating appropriate strategic governance and cost-effective service delivery.
5. That large-scale reorganisation, which inevitably causes disruption and hinders longer-term planning of services, is not best carried out in periods of the most acute financial pressures.
6. That the economic, social and geographical diversity of Wales means that there is no 'one-size-fits-all' solution for local government, and that different models of local government may be appropriate in different parts of Wales.
7. That the opportunity needs to be taken to reconsider who delivers key services at a local level and that this should include considering the further devolution of powers and functions from the Welsh Assembly to principal councils, and from principal councils to lower-tier councils.
8. That moving local government closer to the people requires the strengthening of the community tier of government in Wales, but that the capacity of community and town councils to assume a greater role in an effective and accountable manner varies greatly.
9. That a more strategic approach to planning and economic development in the Cardiff city-region and Swansea city-region is required to enable it to compete effectively with successful city-regions across Europe.
10. That significant reform to Council Tax and business rates is required in order to ensure a fair system for the people of Wales, as well as a revenue stream for local councils to provide good quality public services.
11. That the overall effect of local government reorganization should re-evaluate the current electoral wards in Wales through the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission, and that measures need to be outlined to encourage a greater diversity of backgrounds..

Conference Endorses the Welsh Liberal Democrats Policy Paper *Effective and Accountable Local Government*.

Conference Resolves:

1. To reject the specific proposals of the Williams Report for the reorganisation of principal councils in Wales.
2. To support the development of alternative proposals for the restructuring of local government in Wales that will balance the interests of effective strategic management and service delivery with local accountability, and which have demonstrable public consent.
3. To empower principal councils to voluntarily agree to amalgamate through a majority vote of members from each authority, and subject to public consultation, review by the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission and approval by the Welsh Government on receipt of a clear and acceptable business case, costings and a viable corporate plan for the new authority.
4. In all other parts of Wales, to ask the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission to review the structure of principal local government, including public consultation, and to bring forward proposals for the reorganization of principal councils based on principles of efficiency, accountability and fit with meaningful geographical areas.

5. To strengthen the community tier of government, by empowering accredited community and town councils to play a greater role in decision-making and local service delivery, and by tasking the Local Democracy and Boundary Commission to merge smaller community councils into larger cantref councils, covering meaningful areas, with an enhanced capacity to act and have the capacity to take on local services.
6. To empower local communities in areas that do not currently have a community or town council, by promoting mechanisms for establishing new local councils.
7. Strengthen the role of community, town or cantref councils in relation to local regeneration schemes, to ensure appropriate local accountability.
8. To ensure that Local Authorities have the resources and responsibility for engaging people in Voter Registration, following the introduction of Individual Voter Registration, ensuring that people have a voice in their communities.
8. To reform national park authorities by introducing directly elected members, to ensure that the conservation of nationally important natural and cultural environments is balanced with local accountability and sustainable economic activity.
9. To actively consider the model for council tax reform and other taxes set out in Gerald Holtham's paper, *Taxation for Wales*, so as to produce an equitable local taxation system that is fair, affordable and which makes provision for those least able to pay.
10. To review the system of business rates in Wales so as to remove built in disincentives for business expansion, such review to include consideration of Land Value Taxation.
11. That members of principal councils should be elected through the single transferable vote in multi-member wards .
12. To require all councils to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment of their structures, meeting schedules, standing orders and working practices to ensure that no social group are unfairly disadvantaged in their ability to serve as a councillor after each set of local council elections.
13. To run a promotional campaign to encourage community and town councils to use their power to co-opt non-voting youth representatives, legislate to enable principal authorities to do this, and to encourage all councils to engage more closely with local youth councils and establish Youth Councils where they do not already exist.

PM2. Investing in Prevention

Caerffili, Islwyn & Merthyr Tydfil Liberal Democrats

Original Motion

Conference believes that:

1. People should be entitled to live healthier, happier independent lives and that everyone should have equal access to good health, economic opportunities and social opportunities.
2. Too many individuals and communities are still denied these opportunities.
3. Policies targeted at preventing social problems help to promote well-being, reduce support needs and help individuals and communities to achieve their full potential.
4. Too much government spending is directed towards responding to social problems rather than preventing them.
5. Investing in prevention could reduce the longer term cost of tackling social issues like an ageing population, welfare support, crime and global warming.
6. Policymakers should channel their efforts towards building a society that prevents social problems from arising in the first place rather than one that struggles with their consequences.

Conference welcomes:

1. The conclusion of organisations such as the National Audit Office (NAO) and the Early Action Taskforce is that government should invest increased funds in preventative policies and initiatives.
2. The view of these organisations is that policies aimed at preventing social problems have the potential to result in better outcomes for individuals and return of greater value for public expenditure.

Conference notes with concern that:

1. Levels of public spending on preventative policies have decreased significantly during the current period of austerity.
2. Public opinion often drives politicians to focus on short-term results and payoffs rather than longer term considerations.
3. Barriers such as short-term planning cycles, underinvestment, silo working and poor evidence gathering are hampering the efforts of those policymakers who seek to develop preventative social policy.

Conference calls upon the Welsh Liberal Democrats to:

1. Provide political leadership on this issue by committing to progressively increasing investment in initiatives aimed at addressing social problems at their root cause.
2. Support policy innovations focused on local actions that seek to prevent social problems and unlock people's long-term potential.
3. Consider ways in which social problems can be prevented as well as addressed as a matter of course during the development of all future party policy.
4. Include these commitments in the 2015 General Election Manifesto for Wales.

Annexe: Examples of Preventative Initiatives and their Associated Cost Savings

The Reading Recovery Programme

Reading Recovery (RR) is a short-term intensive literacy intervention programme for primary school children who are experiencing problems with reading and writing after their first year of school.

There are over 60 Reading Recovery centres throughout the UK, Ireland and Denmark. It consists of intensive daily 30 minute one-to-one lessons over a period of approximately 20 weeks, held with a trained literacy teacher.

Poor literacy has been shown to be a serious disadvantage in later life, particularly harming employment chances: the cost to society over an individual's lifetime could be as high as £64,000, around £2bn for all those affected. The programme is estimated to save between £11 and £17 per £1 spent.

www.readingrecovery.ioe.ac.uk/2

Birmingham's Be Active Scheme

Be Active is a scheme offering free swimming, exercise classes or gym use, and some community activities to all Birmingham residents. It aims to tackle health inequalities and associated deprivation; a recent cost benefit analysis found that on average every £1 invested in Be Active generates £21.30 in benefits.

The scheme allows people to use council-run facilities for free during off-peak times, and is mostly funded by the local NHS, with the city council contributing 15% of the cost. In 2011/12 there were 1615 hours of free activities per week.

It has about 300,000 registered users (one third of the population), and 140,000 active users per year. Evaluations show it has increased the number of physically active adults since its introduction. The programme costs £22.0 million over five years, and the analysis suggested the benefits generated by Be Active exceed its cost by £445.2 million. Most of this is improvement in the participants' quality of life (£377.2 million), with the rest split between cash savings (mostly to the local Health Authority) of £28.7 million and cost savings and productivity gains to the public and private sector of £39.2 million.

These benefits accrue mostly to the local health authority, reflecting their contribution to funding the programme. However the impact is long-term, with most benefits occurring after the first five years.

www.birmingham.gov.uk/beactive

Kickz

Kickz began as a joint project between the Premier League and the Metropolitan Police, with the idea of using professional football clubs to help deliver football sessions with young people in deprived areas. It now spans 131 projects involving 43 clubs and over 50,000 young people.

Ninety-one per cent of the programmes run on Friday and Saturday evenings. It is delivered with the help of 5,000 volunteers, many of them young people themselves, and also offers workshops on issues like drug awareness, volunteering, healthy eating, careers and weapons. It allows police and youth workers to build relationships with young people and better understand their concerns.

In Elthorne Park in North London the local project, run with Arsenal, has led to crime falling by two-thirds within a year. An evaluation by New Philanthropy Capital found that every £1 invested in the project created £7 in value for the local community, mostly in savings to the victims of youth and gang violence which used to be common in the area.

The project's core funding comes from the Premier League and the Metropolitan Police, and attracts partner funding to supplement this.

www.addison.ceros.com/kickz/kickz/5/year/celebration/fiveyearcelebration/

School Home Support

School Home Support (SHS) places specialist staff in schools, who work with young people and families to help them get the best out of their education, focusing on young people who are struggling with behaviour, attendance or achievement. In 2009/10 SHS provided services to over 700 schools and intensive support via its 150 practitioners to 220 of these schools in 23 local authorities, mostly in London. In total they supported 20,000 children and families.

SHS work closely with the family as well as the young person, and have been shown to reduce truancy and permanent exclusions, increase attainment, improve behaviour, lead to greater parental involvement, and is enthusiastically supported by headteachers and school staff.

The cost of a permanent exclusion has been estimated at £63,000, and one report estimated SHS saved £1.24 for every £1 spent just through its impact on preventing exclusion. A separate report suggested that in total SHS saved society £21.14 for every £1 spent.

<http://www.schoolhomesupport.org.uk6/>

Age Concern Kingston's "Stay Well at Home" scheme

The Service targets people at risk of losing their independence and supports them to stay well and remain living at home. An SROI study estimated savings in public sector budgets of £268,000 – around three times the investment made by NHS Kingston in funding the pilot.

www.ageconcernkingston.org/uploads/2012/11/ACK-SWaH-reportweb1.pdf

Sources

www.nao.org.uk/publications/1213/early_action_across_government.aspx

<http://www.community-links.org/earlyaction>

Decisions of Conference

Amendment 1

Policy Committee

Insert in Conference Welcomes 1, after "such as" the words "the Wales Audit Office (WAO),"

Amendment 2

Policy Committee

In Conference Calls Upon 4, insert at the end :

"and, more specifically, the 2016 National Assembly for Wales Manifesto."

Amendment 1 was carried 16 votes in favour to 0 against.

Amendment 2 was carried 16 votes in favour to 0 against.

The motion as amended was carried 16 votes in favour to 0 against.

Motion as Passed

Conference believes that:

1. People should be entitled to live healthier, happier independent lives and that everyone should have equal access to good health, economic opportunities and social opportunities.
2. Too many individuals and communities are still denied these opportunities.
3. Policies targeted at preventing social problems help to promote well-being, reduce support needs and help individuals and communities to achieve their full potential.
4. Too much government spending is directed towards responding to social problems rather than preventing them.
5. Investing in prevention could reduce the longer term cost of tackling social issues like an ageing population, welfare support, crime and global warming.
6. Policymakers should channel their efforts towards building a society that prevents social problems from arising in the first place rather than one that struggles with their consequences.

Conference welcomes:

1. The conclusion of organisations such as the Wales Audit Office (WAO), the National Audit Office (NAO) and the Early Action Taskforce is that government should invest increased funds in preventative policies and initiatives.
2. The view of these organisations is that policies aimed at preventing social problems have the potential to result in better outcomes for individuals and return of greater value for public expenditure.

Conference notes with concern that:

1. Levels of public spending on preventative policies have decreased significantly during the current period of austerity.
2. Public opinion often drives politicians to focus on short-term results and payoffs rather than longer term considerations.
3. Barriers such as short-term planning cycles, underinvestment, silo working and poor evidence gathering are hampering the efforts of those policymakers who seek to develop preventative social policy.

Conference calls upon the Welsh Liberal Democrats to:

1. Provide political leadership on this issue by committing to progressively increasing investment in initiatives aimed at addressing social problems at their root cause.
2. Support policy innovations focused on local actions that seek to prevent social problems and unlock people's long-term potential.
3. Consider ways in which social problems can be prevented as well as addressed as a matter of course during the development of all future party policy.
4. Include these commitments in the 2015 General Election Manifesto for Wales and, more specifically, the 2016 National Assembly for Wales Manifesto.

PM3: Building A Stronger Economy

National Policy Committee

Original Motion

Conference Notes:

1. Successive Welsh governments have failed to tackle our core underdevelopment, and have left us with an economy, a skills-base and infrastructure that are not ready for the future;
2. The unemployment rate in Wales has risen by 3.6% between 2007 and 2012;
3. That Wales continues to have the lowest rate of Gross Value Added in the UK;
4. The challenges faced by the Welsh economy such as our lack of capital availability, a weak skills level, and our peripherally and poor connectivity; and
5. The notable opportunities for growth in the Welsh economy such as our proximity to UK and EU markets, existing pockets of innovation and excellence, and our training capacity.

Conference Believes:

1. Government should act to catalyse a strong private sector;
2. We must build our infrastructure, our skills and our export ability, in order to build a stronger economy and a fairer society for Wales;
3. We must be a more confident and internationalist country, and open Wales to the world and its potential for inward investment and export opportunities;
4. We must end the culture of 'one size fits all', and work to set out the frameworks which enable local communities to build their own solutions;
5. We must stand up for the indigenous businesses, particularly the SMEs and microbusinesses which play such a vital role in the Welsh economy, and support their economic success and growth by providing the framework for them to find their own solutions; and
6. Welsh Government needs to create an environment whereby the private, public, not-for profit sectors and local communities can work together to bring both economic and social benefits to the people of Wales.

Conference Endorses the Welsh Liberal Democrats Policy Paper *Building a Stronger Economy*.

Conference resolves to:

1. Deliver a balanced, integrated, export-led economic strategy and address Wales' underdevelopment with a long-term commitment to investing in Wales' people, business and infrastructure, in order to achieve growth in Wales' economy;
2. Improve access to capital and finance by:
 - a. creating a Welsh Development Bank designed to support small businesses in accessing finance and support; developing international links including export and inward investment; and finance major infrastructure projects;
 - b. encouraging the spread of alternative finance providers; and
 - c. supporting the development of community-led mutual and cooperatives.
3. Improve access to markets by:
 - a. developing networks of advisors to provide professional business support;
 - b. appointing a Network Champion to link up and integrate different players in the Welsh economy and be responsible for a diaspora strategy for Wales;

- c. producing a clear export strategy for Wales to match private sector ingenuity with public sector support; and
 - d. encouraging local authorities to engage proactively with local SMEs as part of their procurement strategy.
4. Support our people in improving their skills base and taking advantage of their innovation by:
 - a. investing in education and training;
 - b. embedding wider skills such as entrepreneurship , leadership and management, into the curriculum; and
 - c. enhancing the commercialisation of innovation in Wales higher education sector
5. Supporting growth across all regions of Wales by:
 - a. supporting City Region initiatives and ensuring an adequate statutory basis for them;
 - b. decentralising more powers over economic development from Cardiff Bay, direct to communities;
 - c. supporting the market towns of Wales, the traditional hubs of our communities;
 - d. support the use of Tax Increment Financing for local authorities, enterprise zones and others;
 - e. reform Enterprise Zones including by offering a 100% business rate discount over a five year period for businesses that move to or start-up in an enterprise zone;
 - f. developing our digital economy and infrastructure;
 - g. radically overhauling Wales' transport infrastructure and send the message to investors and entrepreneurs that Wales is 'open for business' by:
 - i. supporting electrification of the North Wales Coast Line and publishing a timetable for full electrification of Welsh railway lines;
 - ii. develop Passenger Transport Authorities to regulate public transport and ensure suitable provision including coverage of bus routes in rural and poorer areas and to develop a South Wales Metro;
 - iii. developing an extensive freight network with access to major ports;
6. Make it all work together by:
 - a. developing an overarching and long term National Growth Strategy setting out our vision for generating growth, to be delivered by a Growth Strategy Panel which would involve all stakeholders;
 - b. exploring creating statutory Chambers of Commerce with operational independence from Welsh Government;
 - c. establishing a Welsh Regulatory Policy Committee to provide independent assessment of potential new regulations and cut regulation on smaller businesses;
 - d. creating a Welsh Treasury which can provide accurate economic data; and
 - e. setting up a commission to examine the long-term skills needs of Wales.
7. Launching a radical and systematic review of the way that business rates are run in Wales.

Decisions of Conference

Amendment 1

Ceredigion Local Party

In Conference Resolves 5.g insert new subpoint:

- “iv. calling for a feasibility study into reinstating the rail links between Aberyswyth and Carmarthen to link up with the already existing network.”

Amendment 2

Ceredigion Local Party

In Conference Resolves, Insert new point 8:

- “8. Call for the reduction of VAT on Visitor Accommodation and Attractions to be reduced from 20% to 5%.

Amendment 1 was carried.

Amendment 2 was carried.

The motion as amended was carried.

Motion as Passed

Conference Notes:

1. Successive Welsh governments have failed to tackle our core underdevelopment, and have left us with an economy, a skills-base and infrastructure that are not ready for the future;
2. The unemployment rate in Wales has risen by 3.6% between 2007 and 2012;
3. That Wales continues to have the lowest rate of Gross Value Added in the UK;
4. The challenges faced by the Welsh economy such as our lack of capital availability, a weak skills level, and our peripherally and poor connectivity; and
5. The notable opportunities for growth in the Welsh economy such as our proximity to UK and EU markets, existing pockets of innovation and excellence, and our training capacity.

Conference Believes:

1. Government should act to catalyse a strong private sector;
2. We must build our infrastructure, our skills and our export ability, in order to build a stronger economy and a fairer society for Wales;
3. We must be a more confident and internationalist country, and open Wales to the world and its potential for inward investment and export opportunities;
4. We must end the culture of 'one size fits all', and work to set out the frameworks which enable local communities to build their own solutions;
5. We must stand up for the indigenous businesses, particularly the SMEs and microbusinesses which play such a vital role in the Welsh economy, and support their economic success and growth by providing the framework for them to find their own solutions; and
6. Welsh Government needs to create an environment whereby the private, public, not-for profit sectors and local communities can work together to bring both economic and social benefits to the people of Wales.

Conference Endorses the Welsh Liberal Democrats Policy Paper *Building a Stronger Economy*.

Conference resolves to:

1. Deliver a balanced, integrated, export-led economic strategy and address Wales' underdevelopment with a long-term commitment to investing in Wales' people, business and infrastructure, in order to achieve growth in Wales' economy;
2. Improve access to capital and finance by:
 - a. creating a Welsh Development Bank designed to support small businesses in accessing finance and support; developing international links including export and inward investment; and finance major infrastructure projects;
 - b. encouraging the spread of alternative finance providers; and
 - c. supporting the development of community-led mutual and cooperatives.
3. Improve access to markets by:
 - a. developing networks of advisors to provide professional business support;
 - b. appointing a Network Champion to link up and integrate different players in the Welsh economy and be responsible for a diaspora strategy for Wales;
 - c. producing a clear export strategy for Wales to match private sector ingenuity with public sector support; and
 - d. encouraging local authorities to engage proactively with local SMEs as part of their procurement strategy.
4. Support our people in improving their skills base and taking advantage of their innovation by:
 - a. investing in education and training;
 - b. embedding wider skills such as entrepreneurship, leadership and management, into the curriculum; and
 - c. enhancing the commercialisation of innovation in Wales higher education sector
5. Supporting growth across all regions of Wales by:
 - a. supporting City Region initiatives and ensuring an adequate statutory basis for them;
 - b. decentralising more powers over economic development from Cardiff Bay, direct to communities;
 - c. supporting the market towns of Wales, the traditional hubs of our communities;
 - d. support the use of Tax Increment Financing for local authorities, enterprise zones and others;
 - e. reform Enterprise Zones including by offering a 100% business rate discount over a five year period for businesses that move to or start-up in an enterprise zone;
 - f. developing our digital economy and infrastructure;
 - g. radically overhauling Wales' transport infrastructure and send the message to investors and entrepreneurs that Wales is 'open for business' by:
 - i. supporting electrification of the North Wales Coast Line and publishing a timetable for full electrification of Welsh railway lines;
 - ii. develop Passenger Transport Authorities to regulate public transport and ensure suitable provision including coverage of bus routes in rural and poorer areas and to develop a South Wales Metro;
 - iii. developing an extensive freight network with access to major ports;
 - iv. calling for a feasibility study into reinstating the rail links between Aberyswyth and Carmarthen to link up with the already existing network.

6. Make it all work together by:
 - a. developing an overarching and long term National Growth Strategy setting out our vision for generating growth, to be delivered by a Growth Strategy Panel which would involve all stakeholders;
 - b. exploring creating statutory Chambers of Commerce with operational independence from Welsh Government;
 - c. establishing a Welsh Regulatory Policy Committee to provide independent assessment of potential new regulations and cut regulation on smaller businesses;
 - d. creating a Welsh Treasury which can provide accurate economic data; and
 - e. setting up a commission to examine the long-term skills needs of Wales.
7. Launching a radical and systematic review of the way that business rates are run in Wales.
8. Call for the reduction of VAT on Visitor Accommodation and Attractions to be reduced from 20% to 5%

PM4. Paying Down the Democratic Deficit

National Policy Committee

Original Motion

Conference notes that:

1. Voter turnout in Wales is at an all time low.
2. Wales has the lowest electoral turnout of the three devolved administrations.
3. The introduction of individual voter registration presents both an opportunity for wider engagement and the possibility that some groups, including young people, ethnic minorities and those who are more transient, will be left off the register.
4. Wales is the only devolved administration not to use Single Transferable Vote for their local election.
5. The capacity of the National Assembly for Wales is not sufficient to effectively scrutinise the full range of powers Wales has now, and will soon be in possession of.
6. The people of Wales currently have no method of recalling an elected representative who has failed to uphold the standards expected of them in office.
7. The Ministerial Code is not overseen by an independent body and as such Ministers who have breached the code are not held to account.
8. The Richard Commission and the Silk Commission have laid out proposals for more adequate powers and scrutiny for Wales.
9. The outcome of the Scottish referendum.

Conference believes that:

1. The people of Wales are not disengaged, but disillusioned by the unrepresentative political systems in Wales.
2. The National Assembly for Wales is important to the democratic future of Wales.
3. The Welsh Government has a responsibility to ensure everyone has access to the opportunity to register to vote whenever they interact with government or a public body.
4. Elected officials should be held accountable for their actions.
5. All elections in Wales should be conducted on a fair voting system.
6. Wales should have more media dedicated to the scrutiny and publicity of politics in Wales.

Conference Endorses the Welsh Liberal Democrats Policy Paper *Paying Down the Democratic Deficit*.

Conference calls for:

1. The number of Assembly Members to be increased in order to provide adequate scrutiny of the Welsh Government and responsible representation of their electorate.
2. A review of the Ministerial Code and its oversight and sanctions to ensure that Ministers are held to a high standard and are fully accountable for their actions.
3. A system of recall for Assembly Members to be triggered by a petition of the electorate.
4. All elections in Wales, including local council, National Assembly and European, to be conducted using a fair voting system, in most cases the Single Transferable Vote system.
5. The voting age in Wales for all elections should be lowered to 16.
6. The opportunity to indicate an alternative preference to candidates on the ballot paper to be available in all elections.

7. A Commission to modernise the voting system including same day registration, early voting and other options to make voting more accessible.
8. Political education in schools to be strengthened.
9. Voter registration sessions to be held in every appropriate educational institution for post-16 education on an annual basis.
10. The Welsh Liberal Democrats to continue to seek further powers for Wales.
11. A renewed push towards a Federal United Kingdom.

Decisions of Conference

Amendment 1

Submitted: IR Cymru

Insert new Conference Notes 4 and renumber:

“4. There is a growing inequality in electoral turnout across the UK, with fewer young people voting than those over 65; in the 2010 General Election there was a 36% difference in turnout for the over 65s than the over 18.”

Insert new Conference Notes 5 and renumber:

“5. Only 35% of 18-24 year-olds turned out to vote in the 2011 Assembly Election, 9% lower than the turnout in the 2010 General Election”

Amendment 2

Submitted: IR Cymru

Insert new Conference Believes 2 and renumber:

“Young people continue to be let down by a political system that fails to give them a voice.”

Insert new Conference Calls For 6 and renumber:

“A National Youth Assembly for Wales that is enshrined in law, independent of Government, and receives direct funding from the Assembly Commission to ensure the continuation of activity.”

Amendment 1 was accepted by the proposers of the motion.

Amendment 2 was carried.

The motion as amended was carried.

Motion as Passed

Conference notes that:

1. Voter turnout in Wales is at an all time low.
2. Wales has the lowest electoral turnout of the three devolved administrations.
3. The introduction of individual voter registration presents both an opportunity for wider engagement and the possibility that some groups, including young people, ethnic minorities and those who are more transient, will be left off the register.
4. There is a growing inequality in electoral turnout across the UK, with fewer young people voting than those over 65; in the 2010 General Election there was a 36% difference in turnout for the over 65s than the over 18.
5. Only 35% of 18-24 year-olds turned out to vote in the 2011 Assembly Election, 9% lower than the turnout in the 2010 General Election
6. Wales is the only devolved administration not to use Single Transferable Vote for their local election.
7. The capacity of the National Assembly for Wales is not sufficient to effectively scrutinise the full range of powers Wales has now, and will soon be in possession of.
8. The people of Wales currently have no method of recalling an elected representative who has failed to uphold the standards expected of them in office.
9. The Ministerial Code is not overseen by an independent body and as such Ministers who have breached the code are not held to account.
10. The Richard Commission and the Silk Commission have laid out proposals for more adequate powers and scrutiny for Wales.
11. The outcome of the Scottish referendum.

Conference believes that:

1. The people of Wales are not disengaged, but disillusioned by the unrepresentative political systems in Wales.
2. Young people continue to be let down by a political system that fails to give them a voice.
3. The National Assembly for Wales is important to the democratic future of Wales.
4. The Welsh Government has a responsibility to ensure everyone has access to the opportunity to register to vote whenever they interact with government or a public body.
5. Elected officials should be held accountable for their actions.
6. All elections in Wales should be conducted on a fair voting system.
7. Wales should have more media dedicated to the scrutiny and publicity of politics in Wales.

Conference Endorses the Welsh Liberal Democrats Policy Paper *Paying Down the Democratic Deficit*.

Conference calls for:

1. The number of Assembly Members to be increased in order to provide adequate scrutiny of the Welsh Government and responsible representation of their electorate.
2. A review of the Ministerial Code and its oversight and sanctions to ensure that Ministers are held to a high standard and are fully accountable for their actions.
3. A system of recall for Assembly Members to be triggered by a petition of the electorate.

4. All elections in Wales, including local council, National Assembly and European, to be conducted using a fair voting system, in most cases the Single Transferable Vote system.
5. The voting age in Wales for all elections should be lowered to 16.
6. A National Youth Assembly for Wales that is enshrined in law, independent of Government, and receives direct funding from the Assembly Commission to ensure the continuation of activity.
7. The opportunity to indicate an alternative preference to candidates on the ballot paper to be available in all elections.
8. A Commission to modernise the voting system including same day registration, early voting and other options to make voting more accessible.
9. Political education in schools to be strengthened.
10. Voter registration sessions to be held in every appropriate educational institution for post-16 education on an annual basis.
11. The Welsh Liberal Democrats to continue to seek further powers for Wales.
12. A renewed push towards a Federal United Kingdom.

Topical Motion to Conference

TM1: Expanding the Democracy of the Welsh Liberal Democrats with
'One Member, One Vote'.
Clwyd West Local Party

Conference Notes:

1. That voting at Conference and in elections to Welsh Party Committees is currently restricted to a limited college which includes MPs, AM, Peers, Unitary Councillors, Party Committee Members, Local Party Officers, candidates for the National Assembly for Wales and Westminster as well as those elected as Conference Representatives by their Local Party or the SAO representing Youth and/or Students.
2. That the 2014 Federal Conference in Glasgow passed the motion entitled Expanding the Democracy of the Party with 'One Member, One Vote'.
3. That in 2009 the Scottish Liberal Democrats adopted the principle of 'One Member, One Vote' at its Autumn Conference and the attendance at their subsequent Spring Conference was the largest for many years.
4. That the Welsh Liberal Democrats already have One Member, One Vote in place for the elections for Leader and Deputy Leaders of the Party and for the President and Deputy President of the Welsh Party.

Conference Believes:

1. That there are three elements to 'One Member, One Vote':
 - a. The right to attend and vote at Welsh Party Conferences (subject to the payment of the relevant registration fee(s))
 - b. The right to nominate candidates for election to Welsh Party Committees and representatives to Federal Party Committees
 - c. The right to vote in the elections for Welsh Party Committees and representatives to Federal Party Committees.

Conference Resolves to:

1. Adopt the principle of 'One Member, One Vote'.
2. Implement the principle of 'One Member, One Vote' in terms of the right of members to attend and vote at Welsh Party Conferences (subject to the payment of the relevant registration fee(s)) with effect from January 2015, thereby abolishing the need for Local Parties to elect representatives to Welsh Party Conferences.
3. Refer the principle of 'One Member, One Vote' for the nomination of candidates for, and the right to vote in, elections to Welsh Party Committees and for Representatives to Federal Party Committees to the Welsh Party's Constitutional Review Panel in order to bring about the relevant constitutional and election rule changes at the Autumn Conference in 2015.
4. Defer the elections to the National Executive Committee and the Campaigns & Candidates Committee by twelve months to the 2016 Autumn Conference to enable the relevant changes to be made to the constitution and election rules without creating problems with how those committees are elected in the interim period.

Decisions of Conference

Motion was carried unamended

BUSINESS MOTIONS

BM1. 2015 Conference Registration Fees for Members

Conference Committee

Conference Notes:

1. That it was agreed by Conference in 2010 that the proposed rates for the following year's Member Registration to the Welsh Liberal Democrat Conference would be brought annually to the Autumn Conference for approval.
2. In 2013 the rates were increased in line with inflation.
3. That the current maximum Standard Member rate for attending Conference is currently £52 and is available for a period of two weeks prior to and at the Conference.
4. That the reduced rate of 15% of the maximum Standard Rate is available between six and two weeks before the Conference.
5. That a further reduced rate of 30% of the maximum Standard Rate is available up to six weeks before the Conference.
6. That the Concessionary Member rates for attending Conference is currently set at 50% of the relevant Standard Member Rate in place at the time of registration.
7. That in addition to the above rates, there shall be a further discount of 50% for members attending their first Welsh Liberal Democrat Conference.

Conference Resolves:

1. That for 2015, the Standard Member rate for attending Conference remains at £52 and the discounted rates and periods of those discounts being available remain unchanged.

Decisions of Conference

Motion was carried unamended

BM2. Ratification of National Executive Committee's Appointment of a New Chair and Members of the Welsh Appeals Panel

National Executive Committee

Conference Notes:

1. That Gareth Morgan, Richard Tyler and Hugh Clark have taken the decision, following lengthy periods of service, to step down as members of the Welsh Appeals Panel.
2. That Gareth Morgan was the Chair of the Welsh Appeals Panel.
3. That, including these resignations there are up to eight places on the panel to be filled and a new chair to be appointed, to complete the term of office which shall expire on 31 December 2017.

Conference Resolves:

1. To express its thanks to Gareth Morgan, Richard Tyler and Hugh Clark for their service to the Party through their work on the Welsh Appeals Panel.

2. To ratify the National Executive Committee's decision to appoint Lord German as the Chair of the Welsh Appeals Panel.
3. To ratify the National Executive Committee's decision to appoint the following members of the panel:
 - a. Brian Willott (Monmouth)
 - b. David Mawdsley (Vale of Clwyd)
 - c. Alison Brebner (Wrexham & Clwyd South)
 - d. Robin Baker (Flintshire)
 - e. David Sharman (Brecon & Radnorshire)
 - f. Mike Day (Swansea & Gower)

Appendix: Biographies (not part of the motion)

Lord German: Former Leader of the Welsh Liberal Democrats.

Robin Baker: Vice Chair of Flintshire Liberal Democrats and was, until recently, Leader of the Lib Dem Group at Flintshire County Council. He has previously held the posts of Treasurer to North Wales Lib Dem AERC, Liberal Democrat Committee Member at the Welsh Local Government Association, and Regional Manager for a North Wales Liberal Democrat Assembly Member. He has a professional background that involved the evaluation of evidence and making decisions based upon the facts presented.

Alison Brebner: Born in Scotland, lived in North Wales for 32 years. Secretary of Wrexham & Clwyd South Lib Dems. Solicitor in private practice, based in Wrexham. Currently the firm's Managing Director.

David Mawdsley: a retired litigation solicitor, who has been an active member of the Party since 1965. He was Chairman of the Liverpool Liberal Party for long periods in the 1970s and 1980s, when he acted as agent for numerous successful candidates at elections for the City Council. It was during this period that the Party first took control of the City Council in 1973, and for the first time in generations contested all eight Parliamentary seats in the City at both General Elections in 1974. After moving from Liverpool, he was involved in the Crosby constituency association, and since retiring to North Wales has been an active member of the Vale of Clwyd Local Party, of which he is currently Chair.

Cllr Mike Day: a Lib Dem member for over 20 years and was elected as Councillor for the Sketty ward in Swansea in 1999. He served as Cabinet Member for Education for 8 years until 2012 and has represented the Lib Dems in Parliamentary and Welsh Assembly elections over the last 15 years. He is married with two grown up children and two grandchildren.

David Sharman:

Dr Brian Willott CB: a former senior civil servant in a variety of posts in the DTI and HM Treasury, becoming Chief Executive of the Export Credits Guarantee Department before joining the Welsh Development Agency as Chief Executive. Since then his activities have included serving for 9 years as a Trustee on the Board of the National Museum, Wales and for 5 years as Chair of the Gwent NHS Trust.

Decisions of Conference

Motion was carried unamended

BM3. Ratification of Presidential Appointments to the Constitutional Review Panel

Constitutional Review Panel

Conference Notes:

1. That John Last, as President of the Welsh Liberal Democrats has re-appointed Carole O'Toole, Pete Roberts and Ian Walton to the Welsh Constitutional Review Panel for a term of office which ends at the close of Spring Conference 2016.

Conference Resolves to ratify the above appointments

Decisions of Conference

Motion was carried unamended

BM4. Constitutional Amendment: Diversity Officer - Committee Membership

Constitutional Review Panel

Conference Notes:

1. That the post of Diversity Officer was created as an Officer of the Welsh Liberal Democrats at the Autumn Conference in 2013.
2. That whilst the post was created, there was no Welsh Party Committee Membership allocated to the post-holder.
3. That the current post-holder is currently a non-voting, co-opted member of the National Executive Committee.

Conference Believes:

1. That in order for the Diversity Officer to play a full role in the work of the Welsh Liberal Democrats s/he should have an active role in the strategic decision making of the Party, in decisions relating to the Party's Election Campaigns and in the nurturing and selection of Candidates at all levels.

Conference Resolves:

1. To amend the Constitution of the Welsh Liberal Democrats adding the Diversity Officer to the list of full members of the National Executive Committee and the Campaigns and Candidates Committee.

Decisions of Conference

Motion was carried unamended

BM5: Constitutional Amendment: Party Disciplinary Processes

National Executive Committee

Conference Notes:

1. That Section C of the Welsh Liberal Democrat Constitution (titled Membership) and Section F of the Welsh Liberal Democrat Membership Rules (titled Refusal of Revocation of Membership) have both been amended in recent years in isolation from each other and there are inconsistencies when applying both sets of rules in cases of Party Discipline.
2. That both sets of rules have now been reviewed together by the Welsh Party Manager and the following amendments are brought to the Conference for approval.

Conference Resolves:

1. In Clause C.5 of the Welsh Liberal Democrat Constitution, to make from the words in bold commencing “Membership may be refused” to the end of the Clause a new Clause C.6 and then renumber subsequent clauses accordingly.
2. In new Clause C.7 delete from “Membership may be revoked” to “or more of the following grounds:” and replace with “Disciplinary action may be undertaken by a Local Party Executive Committee, the Executive Committee of the Specified Associated Organisation (SAO) representing Youth and / or Students (if the member concerned is a member of the Party through that SAO) or the National Executive Committee on one or more of the following grounds:”
3. In new Clause C.7.f replace the words “if a member has failed” with the word “failure”.
4. In new Clause C.7.g replace the words “if a member has failed” with the word “failure”.
5. In new Clause C.8 delete from the “In the event that” to “impose one or more of the following sanctions:” and replace with “In the event that one or more of the grounds for disciplinary action have been established under Clause C.7, above, a Local Party Executive Committee, the Executive Committee of the Specified Associated Organisation representing Youth and / or Students (if the member concerned is a member of the Party through that SAO) or the National Executive Committee may, in accordance with the time-frames laid out in Clause F.3 of the Membership Rules of the Welsh Liberal Democrats (Annexe II of this Constitution) impose any one or more of the following sanctions:”
6. In new Clauses C.8.ii, C.8.iii and C.8.iv replace the word “barring” with the word “bar”.
7. In new Clause C.8.v replace the word reprimanding with the word “reprimand”.
8. At the end of new Clause C.8 insert “, the Chief Executive of the Welsh Party” between “individual concerned” and “and Membership Services.”
9. At the end of new Clause C.8 insert “in writing.” at the end of the sentence after “advised accordingly.”
10. At the start of new Clause C.9 replace the words “process of revocation” with the words “disciplinary process”.
11. In new Clause C.9 replace the words “grounds on which revocation is to be considered” with “grounds for which disciplinary action is to be considered”.
12. In new Clause C.9 insert a full stop after “immediately suspended”, delete the “and” and replace the remainder of the Clause with “In all other cases, the body with the authority to initiate the disciplinary process may suspend membership whilst disciplinary action is being considered subject to the time-frames set out in Section F of the Membership Rules of the Welsh Liberal Democrats.”

13. In new Clause C.12 delete “or C.7” and replace with “to C.8”.
14. In Clause 4.5 of the Model Constitution for Local Welsh Local Parties, delete the words “or revoke the membership of” and replace with “or take disciplinary action against”.
15. In the Membership Rules of the Welsh Liberal Democrats rename Section F to “The Refusal of Membership and the Disciplinary Process for Members”
16. Delete Clauses F.1 to F.7 of the Welsh Liberal Democrat Membership Rules and replace with:
 1. The grounds for refusal of membership and the grounds for disciplinary action being taken against a member of the Party are set out in the Constitution of the Welsh Liberal Democrats (Section C.6 & Section C.7 respectively). Refusal of membership is just as serious and exceptional a course of action as the initiation of any disciplinary process.
 2. Refusal of membership or the undertaking of disciplinary action can be initiated by the Local Party the State Party or the Specified Associated Organisation representing Youth and/or Students (where the individual is a member of the Party through that organisation).
 3. The following procedure shall be followed by Local Parties and shall be completed, unless referred to the Appeals Panel, within six weeks from its initiation by the Local Party. The reasons for refusal of membership or any disciplinary action that is to be taken including any sanction that is to be decided upon must be considered appropriate and must only be from those given in the Constitution of the Welsh Liberal Democrats (Sections C.6, C.7 and C.8 respectively).

For new members only:

- i. When the Membership Secretary receives a list of applicants registered for membership, the Local Party shall operate a system approved by the Executive Committee within the timeframe for the approval of membership as set out in Section A of these Membership Rules. If the Local Party, through this procedure, determines to initiate refusal of membership that person shall be informed by in writing by the Secretary. No formal action shall be taken until a meeting of the Executive Committee which shall be held not more than 5 weeks from the date when this process has been initiated. At that Executive Committee meeting this item of business shall appear formally on the Agenda. The timetable and right of appeal shall be the same as outlined for disciplinary action, below.

In all other circumstances:

- ii. Disciplinary action can only be discussed formally at an Executive Committee meeting of the Local Party which must be held not more than 5 weeks from the meeting at which the matter was first raised. No decision can take place at the meeting where the matter is first raised. This is to allow the Executive Committee and the person concerned to be able to make the necessary preparations to put their cases to the meeting. A separate meeting of the Executive Committee must therefore be called within 5 weeks of the matter first being raised, under the same time frames of notification for a meeting of the Executive Committee as specified in the Local Party Constitution or the Model Local Party Constitution of the Welsh Liberal Democrats. At that Executive Committee, meeting this item of business shall appear formally on the agenda.
- iii. Any member who is facing disciplinary action shall be given, at the same time and under the same notice period as for members of the Executive Committee, the motion which includes the reasons for action being taken, the potential sanction that may be imposed, along with the date, time and place of the Executive Committee meeting at which it is to be discussed, information regarding their right to speak or be represented and details of how any appeal against refusal or the sanction determined as a result of the Executive Committee Meeting can be made. The motion shall not include the

sanction that may be imposed under Clause C.8 to allow the Executive Committee to come to a decision as to the appropriate sanction following receipt of all relevant information and debate. Amendments to the motion shall not be allowed.

- iv. The motion may still be taken at the Executive Committee meeting notwithstanding the absence of the person concerned provided the procedures outlined above have been followed.
 - v. The Executive Committee shall debate the motion but there shall be no comment which is not relevant to the reasons given in the motion. The person whose membership is being refused or revoked or their representative shall be allowed to speak.
 - vi. When the discussion is completed a vote shall be taken at the meeting on the motion as published in the agenda by secret ballot of those present and have been party to the full discussion and are eligible to vote.
 - vii. The outcome of the motion must be communicated to the person concerned in writing within seven days of the Executive Committee meeting at which the motion was voted on. This communication shall also be copied to Membership Services and the Welsh Party, supported by all relevant documents.
 - viii. The above procedure should be completed within six weeks of initiation (including the time required to notify the member of the outcome) unless the Executive Committee has agreed an extension to any suspension under Section F.5, below. If the procedure remains incomplete after this time, the individual concerned shall become or remain a member of the Party automatically and the Executive Committee shall take restorative action to ensure that any suspension is lifted.
 - ix. Nothing in this procedure shall override or take precedence over the Constitution of the Welsh Liberal Democrats or the rights of any members to the Welsh Appeals Panel including Rule F.4, below.
4. Any person who is refused membership or is subject to sanction following disciplinary action has the right of appeal to the Welsh Appeals Panel. If no such appeal is received in writing by the Clerk to the Welsh Appeals Panel within one calendar month from the date of the Executive Committee meeting when the refusal of membership was agreed or the disciplinary hearing took place, the decision of that Executive Committee meeting shall stand.
 5. A member may be suspended by the body undertaking disciplinary action for not more than the full period set out under these rules whilst the process is in progress, and subject to person concerned being notified in writing along with the Chief Executive of the Welsh Party and Membership Services. The date of the decision to suspend shall constitute the initiation of the process of disciplinary action and the Executive Committee shall meet to consider the sanction to be taken within five weeks of the date of suspension. If no such disciplinary hearing occurs or the process is not completed within the timetable, suspension is automatically ended and the Executive Committee shall take the necessary restorative action to ensure that this happens.
 6. A meeting of the Executive Committee may, in exceptional circumstances, extend this suspension where the disciplinary action relates to legal trial or tribunal where such action could be seen as prejudicial or subjudice without a verdict. Where this has happened, the Executive Committee shall specify the length of extension in writing to the member concerned as well as to the Chief Executive of the Welsh Party and Membership Services. A disciplinary hearing must take place not more than three weeks (allowing for due notice to be given) following a verdict being delivered or charges being dropped otherwise the suspension shall be automatically lifted and the Executive Committee shall take the necessary restorative action to ensure that this happens.

7. In matters of urgency the Chair of the Executive Committee may take the decision to suspend a member pending a disciplinary hearing. In such cases the members of the Executive Committee shall be notified immediately and the member concerned shall be notified in writing within seven days. A meeting of the Executive Committee shall take place within 21 days of the decision being taken to determine whether or not the full disciplinary process should be invoked. If the Executive Committee determine that there are grounds for a disciplinary hearing the process shall be deemed to have been initiated and the timetable outlined in Section F.3, above, shall apply. The suspension shall automatically lapse after 21 days if the Executive Committee fails to take any further action.
8. Where a member's suspension has been lifted by virtue of the fact that the process has timed out, the Executive Committee shall not be entitled to initiate a second suspension on the same matter but shall refer the matter to the National Executive Committee for its consideration.
9. In cases where the above procedure is followed by the National Executive Committee or the Executive Committee of the Specified Associated Organisation representing Youth and/or Students, the procedure set out above shall be followed with appropriate changes being made to the organisational bodies concerned.
10. Any person whose membership has either been refused or revoked under these rules or by the Federal or other State Party Constitutions shall not be admitted or readmitted to membership in Wales without the joint consent of the National Executive Committee and the Local Party which that person would become a member of.

Decisions of Conference

Motion was carried unamended

Appendix: Appropriate Sections of the Constitution and Membership Rules with Proposals **HIGHLIGHTED**

Constitution of the Welsh Liberal Democrats

Section C: Membership

1. Membership of the Party is open to all persons who agree with its fundamental values and objectives without discrimination as to age, ethnic origin, religion, disability, gender or sexual orientation.
 - 1.1 Membership shall be acquired through an enrolling body, being:
 - a. a Local Party within the area in which the member lives, works or studies (or, another Local Party with its consent);
 - b. a Specified Associated Organisation representing Youth and/or Students; or
 - c. the Party in accordance with the provisions of its Membership Rules.
2. An applicant shall become a member on acceptance of the enrolling body, payment of the requisite subscription and registration.
3. Responsibility for renewal of membership shall lie with the Party, but it may by a decision of Conference, provide for this function to be fulfilled by any other body or bodies within the Federal Party. Membership will be automatically terminated if the renewal subscription is not received within three months following the due date.
4. All other matters relating to the admission or refusal of admission to membership of any person, or for the revocation or cessation of membership of any member, including the basis on which Local Parties may be involved in the recruitment and renewal of members, shall be governed by this Constitution, any Membership Rules made under this Constitution in accordance with Clause C.9, below, and any membership provisions in the Federal Constitution.
5. No person may simultaneously be a member of more than one Local Party. A member may re-register as of right into a different Local Party under the terms of C.1.1.a, or may, with the consent of the member's previous Local Party where that Local Party has ceased to be appropriate in terms of Clause C.1.1.a, retain membership of that Local Party. A member who is an AM, MP, MEP, prospective National Assembly for Wales, Parliamentary or European Parliamentary candidate or member of a Local Authority may re-register as of right in a relevant Local Party.
6. Membership may be refused by an enrolling body on one or more of the following grounds:
 - a. material disagreement, evidenced by conduct, with the fundamental values and objectives of the Party;
 - b. the admission of the applicant would be likely to bring the Party into disrepute; or
 - c. membership of another political party in Great Britain.
7. **Disciplinary action may be undertaken by a Local Party Executive Committee, the Executive Committee of the Specified Associated Organisation (SAO) representing Youth and/or Students (if the member concerned is a member of the Party through that SAO) or the National Executive Committee on one or more of the following grounds:**
 - a. material disagreement, evidenced by conduct, with the fundamental values and objects of the Party;
 - b. conduct which has brought, or is likely to bring, the Party into disrepute;
 - c. standing against the candidate of the Party in any National Assembly for Wales, Parliamentary or European Parliamentary Election;
 - d. standing against the candidate of the Party in any Local Authority or Mayoral election;
 - e. membership of, or support for, another political party in Great Britain;
 - f. **failure** to comply with electoral legislation; or

- g. **failure** to comply with the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums (2001) Act, the Electoral Administration (2006) Act and / or the Political Parties (2009) Act.
8. In the event that one or more of the grounds for disciplinary action have been established under Clause C.7, above, a Local Party Executive Committee, the Executive of the Specified Associated Organisation Representing Youth and/or Students (if the person concerned is a member of the Party through that SAO) or the National Executive Committee may, in accordance with the time-frames laid out in Clause F.3 of the Membership Rules of the Welsh Liberal Democrats (Annexe II of this Constitution), impose any one or more of the following sanctions.
- i. revoke the membership of the individual concerned;
 - ii. **bar** the individual concerned from holding, or standing for election to, any specified Party office or role either permanently, for a specified period, or until satisfactory training has been undertaken by the individual concerned;
 - iii. **bar** the individual concerned from holding, or seeking to be elected to or appointed to any specified public office on behalf of the Party either permanently, for a specified period, or until satisfactory training has been undertaken by the individual concerned;
 - iv. **bar** the individual concerned from having access to data from Membership Services either permanently, for a specified period, or until satisfactory training has been undertaken by the individual concerned;
 - v. **reprimand** the individual concerned.

The individual concerned, **the Chief Executive of the Welsh Party** and Membership Services, shall be advised accordingly **in writing**.

9. The **disciplinary process** shall not be initiated unless the relevant body has either received recent and appropriate training from the Party in this area of party discipline or has sought advice from the Party as to the processes involved. The relevant member must then be notified of the grounds on which **disciplinary action** is to be considered and be given a reasonable opportunity to reply. Where paragraph (c), (d) or (e) of this Clause (C.6) applies, membership shall be automatically and immediately suspended. **In all other cases, the body with the authority to initiate the disciplinary process may suspend membership whilst disciplinary action is being considered, subject to the time frames set out in Section F of the Membership Rules of the Welsh Liberal Democrats.**
10. The Party's Chief Executive shall be responsible for the maintenance of the Party's Register of Members.
11. Subject to the above, and to the provisions of the Federal Constitution, the Conference shall determine and approve the Membership Rules applicable to the Party.
12. Any person aggrieved by a decision under Clauses C.6 to C.8, above, may appeal to the Appeals Panel, save that any appeal shall be governed by any timetables and rules specified by the Appeals Panel (Section L: Appeals Panel).

Membership Rules of the Welsh Liberal Democrats

F. The Refusal of **Membership and the Disciplinary Process for Members**

1. The grounds for refusal of membership and the grounds for disciplinary action being taken against a member of the Party are set out in the Constitution of the Welsh Liberal Democrats (Section C.6 & Section C.7 respectively). **Refusal of membership is just as serious and exceptional a course of action as the initiation of any disciplinary process.**
2. Refusal of membership **or the undertaking of disciplinary action can be initiated by the Local Party the State Party or the Specified Associated Organisation representing Youth and/or Students (where the individual is a member of the Party through that organisation).**
3. The following procedure shall be **followed** by Local Parties and shall be completed, unless referred to the Appeals Panel, within six weeks from its initiation by the Local Party. The

reasons for refusal of membership or any disciplinary action that is to be taken including any sanction that is to be decided upon must be considered appropriate and must only be from those given in the Constitution of the Welsh Liberal Democrats (Sections C.6, C.7 and C.8 respectively).

For new members only:

- i. When the Membership Secretary receives a list of applicants registered for membership, the Local Party shall operate a system approved by the Executive Committee within the timeframe for the approval of membership as set out in Section A of these Membership Rules. If the Local Party, through this procedure, determines to initiate refusal of membership that person shall be informed in writing by the Secretary. No formal action shall be taken until a meeting of the Executive Committee which shall be held not more than 5 weeks from the date when this process has been initiated. At that Executive Committee meeting this item of business shall appear formally on the Agenda. The timetable and right of appeal shall be the same as outlined for disciplinary action, below.

In all other circumstances:

- ii. Disciplinary action can only be discussed formally at an Executive Committee meeting of the Local Party which must be held not more than 5 weeks from the meeting at which the matter was first raised. No decision can take place at the meeting where the matter is first raised. This is to allow the Executive Committee and the person concerned to be able to make the necessary preparations to put their cases to the meeting. A separate meeting of the Executive Committee must therefore be called within 5 weeks of the matter first being raised, under the same time frames of notification for a meeting of the Executive Committee as specified in the Local Party Constitution or the Model Local Party Constitution of the Welsh Liberal Democrats. At that Executive Committee, meeting this item of business shall appear formally on the agenda.
- iii. Any member who is facing disciplinary action shall be given, at the same time and under the same notice period as for members of the Executive Committee, the motion which includes the reasons for action being taken, the potential sanctions that may be imposed, along with the date, time and place of the Executive Committee meeting at which it is to be discussed, information regarding their right to speak or be represented and details of how any appeal against refusal or the sanction determined as a result of the Executive Committee Meeting can be made. The motion shall not include the sanction that may be imposed under Clause C.8 to allow the Executive Committee to come to a decision as to the appropriate sanction following receipt of all relevant information and debate. Amendments to the motion shall not be allowed.
- iv. The motion may still be taken at the Executive Committee meeting notwithstanding the absence of the person concerned provided the procedures outlined above have been followed.
- v. The Executive Committee shall debate the motion but there shall be no comment which is not relevant to the reasons given in the motion. The person whose membership is being refused or revoked or their representative shall be allowed to speak.
- vi. When the discussion is completed a vote shall be taken at the meeting on the motion as published in the agenda by secret ballot of those present and have been party to the full discussion and are eligible to vote.
- vii. The outcome of the motion must be communicated to the person concerned in writing within seven days of the Executive Committee meeting at which the motion was voted on. This communication shall also be copied to Membership Services and the Welsh Party, supported by all relevant documents.
- viii. The above procedure should be completed within six weeks of initiation (including the time required to notify the member of the outcome) unless the Executive Committee has agreed an extension to any suspension under Section F.5, below, If the procedure

remains incomplete after this time, the individual concerned shall become or remain a member of the Party automatically and the Executive Committee shall take restorative action to ensure that any suspension is lifted.

- ix. Nothing in this procedure shall override or take precedence over the Constitution of the Welsh Liberal Democrats or the rights of any members to the Welsh Appeals Panel including Rule F.4, below.
4. Any person who is refused membership or is subject to sanction following disciplinary action has the right of appeal to the Welsh Appeals Panel. If no such appeal is received in writing by the Clerk to the Welsh Appeals Panel within one calendar month from the date of the Executive Committee meeting when the refusal of membership was agreed or the disciplinary hearing took place, the decision of that Executive Committee meeting shall stand.
5. A member may be suspended by the body undertaking disciplinary action for not more than the full period set out under these rules whilst the process is in progress, and subject to person concerned being notified in writing along with the Welsh Party and Membership Services. The date of the decision to suspend shall constitute the initiation of the process of disciplinary action and the Executive Committee shall meet to consider the sanction to be taken within five weeks of the date of suspension. If no such disciplinary hearing occurs or the process is not completed within the timetable, suspension is automatically ended and the Executive Committee shall take the necessary restorative action to ensure that this happens.
6. A meeting of the Executive Committee may, in exceptional circumstances, extend this suspension where the disciplinary action relates to legal trial or tribunal where such action could be seen as prejudicial or subjudice without a verdict. Where this has happened, the Executive Committee shall specify the length of extension in writing to the member concerned as well as to the Chief Executive of the Welsh Party and Membership Services. A disciplinary hearing must take place not more than three weeks (allowing for due notice to be given) following a verdict being delivered or charges being dropped otherwise the suspension shall be automatically lifted and the Executive Committee shall take the necessary restorative action to ensure that this happens.
7. In matters of urgency the Chair of the Executive Committee may take the decision to suspend a member pending a disciplinary hearing. In such cases the members of the Executive Committee shall be notified immediately and the member concerned shall be notified in writing within seven days. A meeting of the Executive Committee shall take place within 21 days of the decision being taken to determine whether or not the full disciplinary process should be invoked. If the Executive Committee determine that there are grounds for a disciplinary hearing the process shall be deemed to have been initiated and the timetable outlined in Section F.3, above, shall apply. Any suspension shall automatically lapse after 21 days if the Executive Committee fails to take any further action.
8. Where a member's suspension has been lifted by virtue of the fact that the process has timed out, the Executive Committee shall not be entitled to initiate a second suspension on the same matter but shall refer the matter to the National Executive Committee for its consideration.
9. In cases where the above procedure is followed by the Welsh Party or the Specified Associated Organisation representing Youth and/or Students, the procedure set out above shall be followed with appropriate changes to the organisational bodies concerned.
10. Any person whose membership has either been refused or revoked under these rules or by the Federal or other State Party Constitutions shall not be admitted or readmitted to membership in Wales without the joint consent of the National Executive Committee and the Local Party which that person would become a member of.

