

A Strategy for Sustainability

Policy Paper 41



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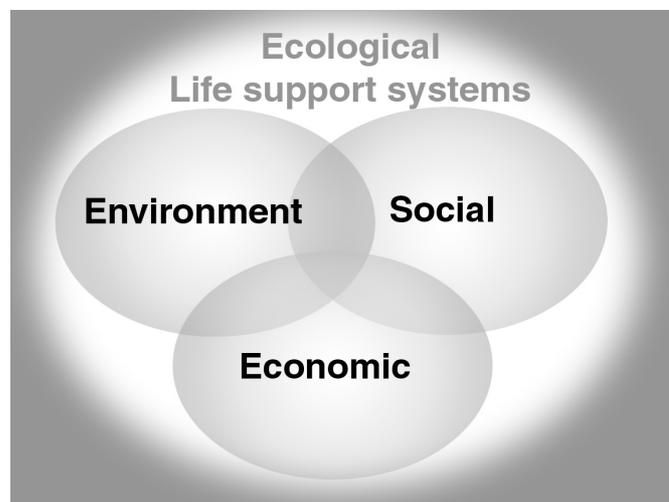
A Strategy for Sustainability

This paper is Liberal Democrats' strategy for sustainability in the UK. We aim to make the strategy unlike any other political policy document you will have read.

- It provides a strategic analysis of the issues – identifying priority areas on a basis of severity and need for intervention and focusing on the important issues.
- It provides an approach that takes a 40-year timescale as its most significant point of reference, rather than solely the five or ten years more usual to political documents.
- It identifies indicators where possible and sets targets for achievement for all major issue areas.
- It maps an approach across conventional government departments, to provide organisational policy and practice, which is clear about its common aims.
- It provides concrete policy proposals which are clearly linked to the strategic analysis, and which are compatible with each of five cross cutting themes, which define the Liberal Democrat approach to this issue.

Sustainability – the starting point

This paper is about how the UK, operating as a part of an international community, can achieve environmental sustainability. There are a number of definitions of sustainability. Our own is straightforward. We believe sustainability requires that:



- Resources are not used faster than they can be replaced or substituted.
- Emissions are not created faster than the natural environment can absorb them.
- Biodiversity is maintained at a healthy level of stability.

Sustainability is not to be confused with *sustainable development* – which is the

process by which society moves towards sustainability.

Sustainable development may consist of social, environmental and economic policy. However, all our activities must fit within the overall limits of the planet's life support systems.

This paper is specifically about how our policies can fit within the ecological limits whose scope is only partly understood. It does not cover all aspects of environmental policy (for example, "noise pollution"), which are not about those physical limits. Nor

does it include other aspects of social and economic policy, which are found in our corresponding policy documents. Our sustainable development manifesto and our Party manifesto are one and the same.

Since the capacity of the Earth's support systems to tolerate damage are not well understood, we believe that there needs to be a greater sense of urgency about how we approach sustainability – and that where there is cause for uncertainty and doubt, a precautionary approach needs to be taken.

Sustainability: The Liberal Democrat Approach

Liberal Democrats have always placed environmental sustainability at the heart of our policy programme. Liberalism is concerned primarily with the distribution of power within society: we want to see a society in which individuals and communities have the maximum degree of freedom to determine and pursue their own ends as best they can. A degraded natural environment places severe restraints on this freedom - it damages personal health and quality of life, it impoverishes economies and it weakens (and occasionally destroys) local communities. This is as true for future generations as it is for present ones.

So not only do we propose policies with the aim of contributing to environmentally sustainable development, but every commitment we make is designed with an awareness of its impact on the ultimate goal of sustainability. Unlike other parties' programmes, this is not an optional add-on, tacked on at the end of the existing policy platform; it is a core commitment.

Priorities

This strategy focuses on the key challenges in achieving sustainability. These are the priority areas that we believe – unless tackled – will make the achievement of sustainable development impossible. Each of the areas have been selected because the consequences of failure in that area are high, and the current trends are that existing policies are not providing effective solutions. There are many other environmental, social and economic issues that have important consequences for us as a society that fall outside the scope of this paper. Our approach to these areas is well covered in other existing policy documents.

The six priority areas are the following:

- | | |
|---|---|
| a) Climate change | d) Sustainable use of natural resources |
| b) Persistent and cumulative organic pollutants | e) Use of land space / protection of habitats |
| c) Local air quality | f) Water use |

One of the most central issues running across many of these priority areas is that of transport. This is of such particular concern we will be producing a separate supplementary paper that will show how these priorities are addressed particularly in this area.

Joining Government Together

Achieving sustainability cannot be done by the DETR, or even by the Treasury acting alone. Many issues cross the existing boundaries of Government and its various agencies. We believe the following map to be broadly accurate.

Government Departments	CC	POP	LAQ	NR	Hab	H2O	Trns
Treasury	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
DfEE	✓		✓	✓			✓
DETR	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
DoH	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
Culture & Arts					✓		✓
Foreign & Commonwealth	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Home Office			✓				✓
MAFF	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
DTI	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
RDAs	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Local Government	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

These reflect existing Government departments (Liberal Democrats have proposed that the DETR should be reformed to incorporate the energy and water functions of the DTI, with local government moved to a new department) – but the above table shows that most of the individual departments should be working together to establish how they could play their part in delivering sustainability. Existing Government measures to introduce “joined-up” thinking – such as the introduction of a “green minister” in every department – have not made much progress in this direction.

Delivering Change

Climate Change

Where we are now

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, representing the vast majority of scientists internationally, predicts that if no action is taken to limit greenhouse gas emissions, temperatures will rise in the range of 1-3.5°C by the end of the century. This would be a faster rate of warming than at any time since the end of the last ice age, 10,000 years ago.

This temperature rise will lead to large-scale disruptions of existing weather patterns, a steadily rising sea level, and widespread damage to buildings and livelihoods throughout the world. The international response, in the shape of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, is a good first step, though inadequate for the longer term, and it is still not known when it will enter into force.

UK emissions of greenhouse gases have fallen in recent years, largely due to the replacement of coal by gas in power generation, but are on an upward trend once more. The targets announced in the Government's recent climate change programme are an improvement on previous UK policy, but are still too unambitious, particularly in areas such as transport and domestic energy use.

Where we want to be

In 40 years time, we need to have achieved a world ceiling on greenhouse gas emissions set considerably lower than the level of emissions today, and probably with continuing targets for further reductions.

We believe that the UK must reduce its emissions to 50% of 1990 levels within 40 years – and should be on line for further reductions to around 20-30% of 1990 levels.

Since, over this timescale, this can be achieved through a mixture of economically benign or beneficial measures, we believe this transition could be to the benefit of the UK economy.

A substantially toughened Kyoto Protocol will form the centrepiece of global co-operation to tackle climate change, embracing all countries. It will set the framework within which business will compete to develop and market new environmentally benign technologies, including a thriving global market in emissions permits, and where developing countries will be able to leapfrog dirty carbon-intensive industries and move directly to the cleaner technologies of the future.

Delivering Change

Persistent and Cumulative Organic Pollutants (POPs)

Where we are now

There has been a growing awareness in recent years of the potential dangers of persistent and “bio-accumulative” chemicals in the environment. These include pesticides (such as DDT); industrial products (PCBs); and unintentionally produced by-products (such as dioxins). Their extreme persistence, bioaccumulation and toxicity, and their ability to be transported around the globe make them of international concern.

There is a frightening lack of the most basic information about chemicals entering the environment – even those being emitted at high volumes. There is little information about the risk that they may pose.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Protocol on POPs was agreed and signed by 33 countries in 1998. All of the listed POP pesticides have been banned throughout Europe, with action under way to dispose of remaining PCBs (which remain in a lot of existing electrical equipment) and to control emissions of dioxins.

Meanwhile, the majority of POPs produced from man’s activities are still being released into the environment.

Where we want to be

Within 40 years, there should be no UK production or use of persistent, bio-accumulative chemicals – this includes those that have yet to demonstrate proven toxicity effects. Alternative methods will have been developed to replace persistent pollutants in all essential uses, and techniques will have been devised to make progress on the reduction of existing pollutants from the environment. International agreements (such as the forthcoming UNEP convention) phasing out key pollutants, with the widespread sharing of alternative technology, will have been agreed and implemented.

Replacements introduced should not damage the environment.

Within 40 years, we should have made significant progress towards our ultimate aim of achieving concentrations in the environment near background values for naturally occurring substances and close to zero for man-made synthetic substances.

Delivering Change

Local Air Quality

Where we are now

There is considerable concern that air pollution arising from traffic, factories, homes and offices, and agricultural practices may be injuring the health of a significant percentage of the population. It is estimated that 24,000 people die every year prematurely as a result of air pollution.

Many of the principal air pollutants come from traffic. These include nitrogen dioxide, particulates (PM10), and carbon monoxide – all of which can be detrimental to health. Sulphur dioxide is added both by diesel vehicles and power stations. There are also volatile organic carbons (VOCs), which arise from traffic and the use of products containing organic solvents.

However, the quality of information is not good. Government currently measures a very limited number of sites for some pollutants (84 urban sites, just 19 rural). The information we have suggests a downward trend for some pollutants, although with some failing to meet target safety levels. The Government recently weakened its own target on particulates when it became clear it would not be met without more positive action.

Where we want to be

Within 40 years, we expect to be able to know exactly how good or bad the air quality is in any sector of any town or region in the country.

We expect science to have developed further our understanding on the health and environmental effects of different pollutants.

Within 40 years, we believe it should be realistic to expect that all major health-harming pollutants should have been brought down to half the current levels in the environment (not counting natural background levels which may be expected to be present for some substances).

Delivering Change

Sustainable Use of Natural Resources

Where we are now

The current use by the UK of natural materials is completely unsustainable. Irreplaceable fossil fuels are being consumed for energy at an ever-faster rate. Waste is being generated at high levels, much of which is disposed of inappropriately – i.e. through landfilling.

The UK has a low overall recycling rate – at 8% overall. Acute overfishing is leading to a crisis in the fishing industry. Although some progress has been made on sustainable forestry, a large amount of timber used in the UK is still produced unsustainably.

Rates of material consumption per head of population continue to rise. Population itself is rising, albeit at a gradual rate.

Where we want to be

Within 40 years, we believe we should have been able to achieve some of the essential components of sustainability. These include:

- All renewable resources being used only at replacement levels – including forestry and fishing
- Waste going to landfill at 2% of 1998 levels
- Stable levels of population
- Stable levels of material consumption per head of population, attained at targets 30% lower than 1998 levels.
- A significant acceleration of the current rate at which the economy is gradually becoming less resource and pollution-intensive as it develops.
- Matching European best practice for 100% of recycling of construction aggregates, and an overall reduction in the use of aggregates of 40%

Delivering Change

Use of Land Space / Protection of Habitats

Where we are now

Industrial and agricultural development has destroyed much of our natural heritage. Only fragments of our once rich wildlife habitats now remain. Demand for new homes, roads and water resources and intensive agriculture practices continue to contribute to the steady decline of wildlife. Almost a half of the 50 bird species found on farmland have declined in numbers. Designated sites, such as SSSIs continue to suffer. Legislation so far has failed to protect our most valuable sites. More than 300 SSSIs are lost or damaged every year.

In 1997 52% of housing development takes place on brownfield sites. The Government has a target of increasing this to 60% by 2008. According to the Lord Rogers Urban Task force report published in 1999, on the government's current performance, this modest target will be missed by around 5%.

In 1997, 3 per cent of all land changing to residential use took place within areas designated as greenbelt. An estimated 3.8 million homes are needed by 2021.

Where we want to be

Within 40 years we should have:

- Halted the destruction of SSSIs and other key wildlife sites.
- Achieve a stable or increasing proportion of green land. Set an interim overall target of 75% of all development on Brownfield land, applied as a national aggregate target allowing local flexibility.
- Provided a much healthier environment (more habitats, less pollution, etc) in which wildlife can thrive, leading to a reversal of the current decline in wildlife numbers and varieties, and seeing species which are now extinct in the UK successfully reintroduced.

Delivering Change

Water Use

Where we are now

Overall the UK has a plentiful natural supply of freshwater, but the distribution of these resources does not match that of demand. The amount of available water per head of population continues to fall. In the Thames, Anglia and Yorkshire regions, abstractions are more than two-thirds of rainfall.

More recently, the dry summer of 1995 has highlighted the pressure that the system is under strain. In some areas, over-extraction has led to unacceptably low flows in river levels.

Considerable stretches of UK rivers remain grossly polluted, although progress has been made in this area over the last ten years.

Where we want to be

Over 40 years, we believe that the percentage of available water resources used per head of population must have been stabilised. Greater efficiency in the industrial and domestic use of water should have led abstraction levels to no more than 60% of available resources.

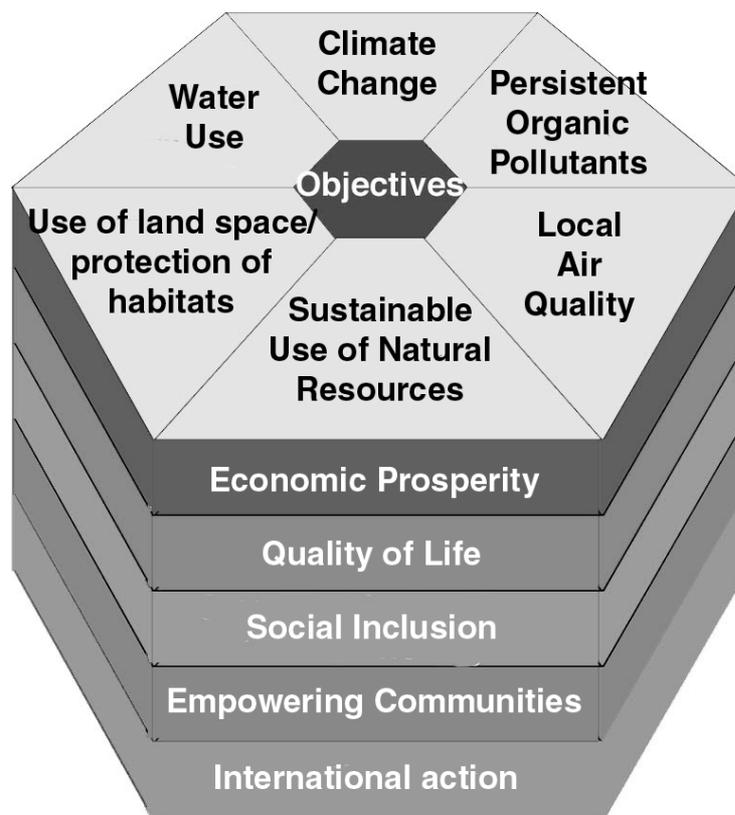
We believe it is realistic to expect that all rivers and waterways will have reached the “good” or “fair” top ratings for chemical quality, with 90% in the top category. This high quality will be held at a consistent level, throughout variations of climate.

Within 40 years, a buffer should have been built into our practice to take account of changes in water levels as a result of climate change.

Making Choices – the cross cutting themes

There may be many approaches to tackling the above priorities. We, as Liberal Democrats, have strong preferences that we have presented as crosscutting themes throughout this strategy paper. All of the policies presented here have been developed in the light of, and under the scrutiny of, the following key areas:

1. Economic prosperity
2. Improving quality of life
3. Social inclusion
4. Empowering communities
5. International Co-operation



Economic Prosperity

We believe that a sustainable future can be one that is economically prosperous, with people employed in jobs that provide useful, satisfying work. It is possible for people to meet many – although not necessarily all – of their wants as well as their needs within such a framework.

This being said, the achievement of sustainability will pose major challenges to conventional views of the desirability of economic growth as a crude target of economic policy, and the definition of consumer needs in terms of the consumption of goods.

We do not state that there can be no economic growth in a sustainable society – but that economic growth must become detached from the growth in levels of material consumption and waste for this to happen. To succeed in this aim, we need new ways of measuring economic prosperity which is about the value of economic activity, and which takes into account the depletion of natural capital.

The rate of increase of GDP does not measure quality of life or the health of the economy – it merely measures the amount of money that changes hands. Policies which simply boost GDP regardless of the cost are outdated and of dubious value. Policies that would seek to artificially reduce GDP with the view this must necessarily be good for the environment would be disastrous. We have seen many recessions in recent decades – none have had a beneficial effect on sustainable development.

Improving Quality of Life

Material consumption in the developed world has grown to levels that are seriously unsustainable. The aim of our policy is not that people should be required to “go without” but that the issue should be redefined one as improving and changing how people define real quality of life.

According to the US Index of Social Health, people believe that their quality of life over the last 20 years has declined by 50% - approximately the same amount that consumption has risen. We need to find new models of economic success that are about improving people’s lives, not based on sheer volume of goods supplied.

Social Inclusion

We believe that the benefits of sustainability must be made available to all members of society. We should use policies for sustainability to break down barriers that challenge the health of poorer people living in fuel poverty, or to build economic policies that reduce unemployment in particular areas or ethnic minority sections of the community.

Policies for sustainability must, wherever possible, be progressive in their impact – or part of an overall package that is progressive.

Empowering Communities

Liberal Democrats do not believe that truly sustainable policies can be imposed from a central authority. Global authority needs to set the parameters for policy – but then the aims and objectives of specific actions are best developed and implemented at the lowest appropriate level.

We believe that citizens change behaviour to embrace sustainability when they are empowered to take decisions, to understand the consequences of decisions, and to take action for themselves. Sustainability cannot be enforced upon a grudging community.

International Co-operation

Successful policies need to be arrived at on a global scale, and an active UK government can place a part in this. Equally, the UK should be quick to learn from examples of best practice wherever they occur across the globe. International policy per se is outside the remit of this paper, but has been dealt with almost in parallel by Policy Paper 35, *Global Responses to Global Problems (2000)*. We do, however, seek to illustrate pointers to where international influence or action would enhance the strategy contained in this paper.

Summary

The purpose of this 40-year strategy is to provide a framework for action around which national and local government, public agencies and citizens can unite. Although the action plan for the strategy is focused on Government policy, few of the objectives of sustainability can be delivered by Government alone.

We believe that a sustainable future is achievable, and that there is already evidence of steps in the right direction that can be taken. We believe it is essential that best practice techniques that are developed be used on a massive scale equal to the scale of the challenge.

SWOT Analysis of the UK Relating to Sustainability

Strengths

- Well-informed and aware public
- Wide acceptance of the need for change
- Strong legal framework with relatively effective enforcement
- Temperate climate
- Island status provides barrier to cross-border problems
- Strong NGOs / pressure groups
- Good natural energy reserves
- Educational infrastructure
- Strong sense of identity and community
- Strong international player, member of European bloc.
- Post-industrial economy
- Strong base of biodiversity
- Strong base of Local Agenda 21 programmes in many areas

Opportunities

- Renewable energy
- Innovation in sustainable technology
- Appetite for organic agriculture/food
- Eco-efficiency making UK more competitive
- Building on a conserving culture
- Use European role
- Development of sustainable agriculture
- E-business and E-commerce
- Engaging people in sustainability programmes who are presently excluded
- Making the most of natural and built environmental assets
- National partnerships between public and private sector
- Promote environmental technologies as a key high-growth sector
- Developing city and town centres to boost economic performance and quality of life
- Implement integrated approach across Government departments and associated agencies

Weaknesses

- Chronic under-investment in public infrastructure, especially transport
- Action does not match awareness
- High population density
- Transport-intensive economy
- Lack of political will or awareness through government
- Lack of investment in technological solutions
- Concentrated areas of urban and rural deprivation leading to social exclusion, poor health, poor housing and unemployment
- Current slow take up of information technologies
- Lack of integration of sustainability into mainstream business thinking / business support
- Weakness in planning framework

Threats

- Apathy preventing effective action
- Short term political and business culture
- Strong vested interests derail effective action
- Changing lifestyles and family structures moving away from sustainable practice
- Risk of losing public sympathy through ill-conceived initiatives
- Continuation of “two-speed” economy increasing gap between north and south
- Failure to face and tackle key problems
- Action on key challenges made impossible due to political opportunism
- Lack of capacity in public transport constraining alternatives
- Marginalisation of sustainability issues
- Euroscepticism
- Continuing erosion of habitats
- Certain policies become articles of faith and are implemented regardless of their true value
- Bureaucratic resistance to change

Policy Framework - Climate Change

Policy Objective	Policy Proposals	Milestones
<p>Reduce overall energy demand to support required greenhouse gas emission reductions</p>	<p>Accept climate change levy as main market instrument with the revenue being used to reduce other taxes. Move application of levy upstream, to tax at the point of generation</p> <p>Emissions trading system introduced – incentive to take part of discount on climate change levy</p> <p>Reduce VAT on all energy conservation materials to 5%</p> <p>Abolish fuel poverty in the UK through targeted programme of investment in energy efficiency organised by the Energy Saving Trust – achieved by new obligations and the climate change levy</p> <p>Raise fuel efficiency of UK vehicles through tax changes (more graduated VED and further company car tax reforms) – supporting eventual move to technology-forcing regulation to improve efficiency standards</p> <p>Focused and substantially increased investment in investment in public transport</p> <p>Use of planning system and development of electronic infrastructure to reduce the need to travel</p> <p>Measures to reduce energy use in air travel put in place (see <i>Our Skies</i> (1997), the recent Lib Dem policy paper on Air travel</p>	<p>Emissions trading up and running within 1 year</p> <p>Energy demand reduced by 30% within 40 years</p> <p>Fuel poverty in the UK effectively eradicated within 15 years</p> <p>Motor vehicles to have doubled in fuel efficiency within 10 years</p> <p>Internal combustion engine replaced with motor vehicles within 40 years</p> <p>Road traffic reduction of 10% within 10 years</p> <p>Emissions at 50% of 1990 levels within 40 years</p>
<p>Achieve fuel switching from coal to gas and from fossil / nuclear to renewables</p>	<p>Vary the level of the climate change levy with carbon intensity of fuel, giving it many of the essential features of a standard carbon tax</p>	<p>20% of electricity supply to be provided by renewables within 10 years</p> <p>Renewables to provide 60% of electricity within 40 years</p>

	<p>Extend requirements on electricity generators to use renewable sources and Combined Heat and Power</p> <p>Support community- based renewable energy schemes.</p>	
<p>Effective adaptation measures taken to the unavoidable effects of climate change</p>	<p>Local area adaptation plans continue to be drawn up and refined by the Environment Agency</p> <p>Investment decision on infrastructure spending to take account of likely effects of climate change, including decisions on where to site new homes / business premises</p>	<p>Interim targets agreed within 3 years</p>

Putting Principles into Practice – Climate Change

Priority Areas	Economic Prosperity	Quality of life	Social Inclusion	Empowering Communities	International co-operation
Reduce overall energy demand to support required greenhouse gas emission reductions	<p>Emissions trading enables businesses to reduce emissions in the most cost effective manner</p> <p>Reduction of VAT on energy saving materials boost to relevant industries</p> <p>Investment programme in public transport boost for transport sector companies, plus reduction in costs of congestion</p> <p>Competitive advantage through establishing a leading edge in energy efficiency technologies</p> <p>Environmental taxes offset by reductions in other business taxes – evidence suggests this could lead to higher, not lower, growth overall</p>	<p>Better quality public transport available to provide access to goods and services etc.</p> <p>Reductions in car numbers improve quality of urban environment</p> <p>More jobs created within more labour-intensive energy efficiency industries</p>	<p>Abolition of fuel poverty – directly benefits the poorest section of the community</p> <p>Improvement of public transport benefits those unable to use – or to afford to use - private car</p> <p>The taxation of vehicles (particularly company cars) and fuel to create powerful incentives to purchase the most fuel-efficient models.</p> <p>In medium term – improvements in fuel efficiency of vehicles brings further benefits to both urban environments and rural areas.</p>	<p>Local decision making on how to target public transport infrastructure expenditure and how to meet national road traffic reduction targets</p>	<p>Entry into force of Kyoto Protocol as soon as possible, if necessary without US ratification</p> <p>Revision of the Kyoto protocols to strengthen them</p> <p>Extension of Protocol commitments to developing countries</p> <p>Support for international emissions trading regime</p> <p>Work to introduce an international air fuel tax, to bring costs of air transport into line with other modes of transport</p>

	Businesses benefit through competitive advantage in the new energy industries	Reduction in the costs to society of dirtier forms of power generation	Ensure jobs created in the emerging new energy industries are available to workers formerly employed by the old, dirtier energy supply industries	Full community involvement in the development of alternative energy solutions – such as wind farms etc. – in local areas.	Support for technology transfer to developing countries Work to ensure goals met across Europe
Effective adaptation measures taken to the unavoidable effects of climate change	Advance planning reduces risk and reduces likely costs of climate-change driven damage	Defensive work (barrages etc.) prevents or mitigates flood problems, with managed retreat in appropriate areas. New homes are located in areas that will be less at risk from climate change effects.	Requirements on providers of social housing to take climate change effects into account in developing properties	Local area adaptation plans continue to be drawn up and refined by the Environment Agency	Continue to contribute to international scientific research to understand likely effects of climate change

The Five Year Priorities

Climate Change

The key short-term challenge on climate change is to strengthen the existing international regime – encouraging major nations such as Russia and the US to ratify and enforce the 1997 Kyoto Protocol – and to extend its coverage to developing countries as soon as possible. There is also an urgent need to address UK contributions to climate change that, after the initial period enjoyed through the switch of energy production from coal to gas, are forecast to rise. Key priority areas are therefore:

1. Putting into place effective environmental taxation that will play an important part in reducing overall energy demand. This will include accepting the climate change levy introduced by the Government as the main market instrument, with the revenue raised being used to reduce other taxes –applicable both to the domestic and private sectors. The tax should be implemented more at the source of energy production – which would extend its impact to domestic energy. It should begin to be variable according to the contribution of the energy source to climate change or – in the case of nuclear – other significant environmental risks. Emissions trading should be introduced as early as possible to make the achievement of reductions easier for UK business and industry.
2. The Government should at the same time make it less expensive to improve energy efficiency. VAT on all energy conservation materials should be reduced to 5%.
3. Fuel efficiency of motor vehicles should be raised through incentives. Initially, more graduated VED going down to zero for the least polluting vehicles (retaining the vehicle license system to be able to track car ownership and disposal), and further company car tax reforms. Expectations should be raised that regulatory measures will be used over time to enforce minimum standards in keeping with known technical progress in improving efficiency.
4. There should be a focused and substantially increased investment in investment in public transport. Concern on the consistent under-investment in public transport has now made this issue of as much concern to public opinion as traditionally strong issues such as the NHS and education. Improving a chronically poorly served infrastructure will not come cheap. Better public transport can be funded by targeted congestion charging, but the public transport improvements must be done before changes in travel behaviour will be achieved.
5. Extending the requirements on electricity generators to use renewable sources and Combined Heat Power energy production.
6. One of the most damaging forms of transport in terms of climate change is air transport. There should be urgent attention given towards achieving progress on an international aviation fuel tax to bring the financial costs of moving goods and people around by air more in line with the real environmental costs.

Policy Framework – Persistent & Cumulative Organic Pollutants

Policy Objective	Policy Proposals	Milestones
No UK production of persistent, bio-accumulative chemicals	<p>Ban as soon as possible initial action list of target chemicals under the UNEP POPs treaty currently under negotiation.¹</p> <p>Support for business development of alternatives to persistent toxic chemicals for industrial and agricultural uses – active promotion and dissemination of best practice techniques on environmental practice</p> <p>Adopt the precautionary approach to hazard identification in new chemicals</p> <p>Reform of CAP to move towards greater take-up of organic agriculture through the use of countryside management contracts, leading to reductions in pesticide use</p>	<p>Interim targets agreed within 5 years</p> <p>OSPAR target of cessation of emissions, discharges and losses of all hazardous substances achieved within 20 years</p>
Achieve concentrations in the environment near background values for naturally occurring substances and close to zero for man-made synthetic substances.	<p>Identify stocks of obsolete chemicals and contaminated wastes for safe and effective destruction</p> <p>Improve and broaden monitoring practice of chemicals in the background environment, including the marine environment, to provide reliable information for decision making</p>	<p>Interim targets agreed within 5 years.</p> <p>Progress towards achievement of objective in line with interim targets in 40 years.</p>

¹ These are: aldrin, chlordane, DDT, dieldrin, dioxin, endrin, furans, heptachlor, hexachlorobenzene, mirex, PCBs, and toxaphene.

Putting Principles into Practice – Persistent Organic Pollutants

Priority Areas	Economic Prosperity	Quality of life	Social Inclusion	Empowering Communities	International co-operation
No UK production of persistent, bio-accumulative chemicals	Support for business development of alternatives – opportunity to develop UK leading edge in environmental technology solutions	Reduction of some areas of environmental risk to individuals due to stored or obsolete chemicals	Benefits to poorest people who often are housed closer to industrial processes which produce polluting chemicals	Improve accessibility to local information about chemical processes and / or known problems	Support rapid implementation of agreements such as OSPAR.
Achieve concentrations in the environment near background values for naturally occurring substances and close to zero for man-made synthetic substances.	Promotion and dissemination of best practice techniques – uptake can give strong reputational benefits to companies	Impact on health as a result of reductions of harm-causing chemicals accumulating in the environment	Health benefits universally applicable Analysis to be made of price impacts on key goods and services which may increase in price as a result of new processes to ensure these do not disadvantage poorest people	Local authorities to carry out extensive analysis of chemical release issues in their area – with requirement to involve local communities in consultation and action around national targets	Take action within the framework of international treaties and negotiations.

The Five Year Priorities

Persistent Organic Pollutants

The immediate priority of a Liberal Democrat government will be to take rapid and decisive action on reducing the production of key pollutants, whilst setting into place the international framework that will provide real improvements in the future. Key policies will therefore be:

1. Ban as soon as possible the initial action list of target chemicals under the UNEP POPs treaty. These represent an international consensus on the most damaging chemicals currently produced that are building up in the environment.
2. Provide support for business development of alternatives to persistent toxic chemicals for industrial and agricultural uses, with active promotion and dissemination of best practice techniques on environmental practice. Our determination to completely end the production of the most damaging chemicals must be implemented in a way which encourages UK industry to become sector leaders in the production and commercial exploitation of safe alternatives, rather than providing unrealistic timeframes that damage confidence and competitiveness.
3. Identify stocks of obsolete chemicals and contaminated wastes for safe and effective destruction. Effective destruction here must mean the use of best practice techniques shown to produce zero toxic residues.
4. Improve and broaden monitoring practice of chemicals in the background environment to provide reliable information for decision-making.

Policy Framework – Local Air Quality

Policy Objective	Policy Proposals	Milestones
<p>Reduce major air pollutants to a minimum of half the current levels in the environment</p>	<p>Focused and substantial investment to provide realistic public transport solutions to key public needs – focused on those areas where policy can most easily achieve major shifts of transport behaviour</p> <p>Operating subsidies phased in for public transport, paid for by congestion charging, where major shifts in transport behaviour can be achieved, with preference given to areas identified as suffering significant deprivation.</p> <p>Technology-forcing measures on vehicle efficiency and the use of alternative fuel systems</p> <p>Fuel duty rebate for buses tied to better maintenance and efficiency of bus vehicles</p> <p>Powers and resources given to local authorities for road charging schemes for areas of major congestion</p> <p>Integration of air quality monitoring systems with electronic road charging</p> <p>Encouragement for local authorities to make city centres car free</p> <p>Regulatory measures to improve the efficiency of freight vehicles year on year</p>	<p>Doubling of vehicle efficiency in 10 years</p> <p>Doubling of vehicle efficiency again in second 10 years</p> <p>End of use of internal combustion engine within private cars within 40 years</p> <p>Powers relating to road charging in place within 5 years</p> <p>Decrease traffic levels by at least 1% annually, having achieved stability within first 5 years</p>
<p>Improve quality of information on air quality</p>	<p>Increase the number of air monitoring sites for key pollutants in all areas</p> <p>Aim for real time air quality information accessible through libraries and the internet for all council wards</p>	<p>300 monitoring sites in place within 5 years</p> <p>3,000 monitoring sites in place within 40 years</p>

Putting Principles into Practice – Local Air Quality

Priority Areas	Economic Prosperity	Quality of life	Social Inclusion	Empowering Communities	International co-operation
Reduce major air pollutants to a minimum of half the current levels in the environment	<p>Public transport infrastructure spending supports key construction and transport industries</p> <p>Quality service provision supports growth of business green travel plans</p> <p>Measures to improve vehicle efficiency reduces business costs</p> <p>Charges on company car parking offset with business rate reductions</p>	<p>Widespread benefits to health from cleaner air</p> <p>Greater amenity value of many areas due to cleaner and less congested conditions</p>	<p>Improvements in public transport service levels huge benefit to those unable to drive, or to afford a private vehicle</p> <p>Poorer areas set to improve proportionately more</p> <p>Operating subsidies for public transport within priority areas benefit people in poorest areas</p>	<p>Local authorities given full power of decision making about local congestion charging measures</p> <p>Local travel plans produced, within framework of regional co-operation</p>	Support and strengthen the Long Range Transboundary Air Pollution Convention
Improve quality of information on air quality	<p>Stimulate market for environmental technology through higher demand for monitoring equipment and skills</p> <p>Provide businesses with reliable impact information affecting their business sites</p>	Reliable information for people with health sensitivity to air pollution, enabling them to take better informed decisions to avoid polluted areas	Work with major retailers to make information accessible and available to people without computers or living close to a library	Provision of real-time local information empowers communities to make decisions affecting local air quality	Identify and share best practice on air quality monitoring internationally

The Five Year Priorities

Local Air Quality

1. Increase the number of air monitoring sites for key pollutants in 300 separate sites. Operation of monitoring to fall to the local authority, with commensurate resources provided by central government.
2. It is now well understood that measures to restrict or discourage the use of the private motor car cannot be successful in isolation from measures to improve popular support for the alternatives. This implies a change in how public transport is perceived by the public, matched by a significant improvement in performance, both in terms of reliability and comfort. We believe this can only be achieved through the early commencement of a targeted substantially increased programme of investment into public transport infrastructure – aimed at improving quality and performance of rail and bus systems plus cycleways and safe routes to school.
3. Produce action plan for the phasing in of operating subsidies for key public transport modes in areas of particular need.
4. Introduce fuel duty rebate for buses tied to better maintenance and efficiency of bus vehicles.
5. Encouragement for local authorities to make city centres car free wherever possible.
6. Establish timing and extent of technology-forcing legislation on fuel efficiency in motor vehicles.
7. Charges on company car parking offset with business rate reductions. The aim for this shift is not to produce larger quantities of tax revenue, but simply to change the patterns of behaviour by business in encouraging them to introduce green travel-to-work plans (such as those being piloted by some key UK companies).

Policy Framework – Sustainable Use of Natural Resources

Policy Objective	Policy Proposals	Milestones
<p>All renewable resources being used only at replacement levels</p>	<p>Support private sector led initiatives throughout the supply chain to encourage low-impact fishing methods.</p> <p>Establish Regional Management Boards involving all stakeholders in the fishing industry to implement plans to manage fishing along more sustainable lines.</p> <p>Support international and European agreements</p> <p>Establish a national audit of timber sourcing to provide information on sustainable sourcing of current consumption.</p> <p>Requirements within company law for reporting on use of raw materials and sustainable sourcing</p> <p>Establishment of national certificate criteria for sustainable timber sourcing – with requirement for all imports to carry certificate within realistic timeframe.</p>	<p>Scientific evidence of year on year recovery and stabilisation of fish stocks.</p> <p>Interim targets on sustainable timber sourcing agreed within five years.</p> <p>Within 20 years achieve the zero use of unsustainably sourced timber</p>
<p>Stable levels of material consumption per head of population, attained at reduced levels than 1998.</p>	<p>Encourage the growth of more environmentally benign modes of business – which provide incentives for longer life goods.</p> <p>Work with businesses to reduce distance travelled by products and component parts during manufacture</p> <p>Encourage rapid development within the UK of an e-business culture – maximising efficiency gains through the use of networking technologies</p> <p>Raise public awareness of the effects of current</p>	<p>Levels of material consumption per head stabilised within 10 years</p> <p>Material consumption per head 30% lower than 1998 levels within 40 years.</p>

	<p>resource consumption</p> <p>Examine the use of economic instruments to encourage a resource efficient industrial culture through the establishment of an environmental taxation commission</p> <p>Environmental taxation commission to provide advice on percentage of tax take to be achieved through environmental taxation</p>	
Stable levels of population	<p>Monitor population trends to ensure current trend towards stabilisation continues</p> <p>Provide top quality family planning provision and education to ensure individual choice</p> <p>Avoid government promotion of particular life choices being exalted as preferable</p> <p>Encourage business planning for impact of demographic changes on workforce</p> <p>Target overseas development at measures to assist in stabilising populations through improving economic security and education</p>	<p>Population stabilisation trends well established in 40 years – full stabilisation expected within 60 years.</p> <p>Population trends stabilising across the globe within 40 years</p>
Waste going to landfill at 2% of 1998 levels	<p>Gradual increase in the landfill tax to encourage alternative methods of disposal, backed up by eventual ban on all but certain exempt types of waste</p> <p>Establish minimum recycled content of certain goods, with mandatory labelling for most goods</p>	<p>90% kitchen and garden wastes composted within 40 years</p> <p>Domestic recycling rates up to 60% within 10 years</p> <p>2% level achieved within 40 years</p>
Use of non-renewable resources to be appropriate to aim of replacement or non-use.	<p>Ensure that the cost of using natural resources takes account of the environmental costs of their extraction, processing and disposal.</p> <p>Increase requirements for</p>	<p>100% of recycling of aggregates in road building within 20 years</p> <p>30% overall reduction in the use of aggregates within 40 years</p>

	<p>aggregates recycling for public programmes</p> <p>Technology-forcing measures with car manufacturers to improve fuel efficiency of motor vehicles and key household and industrial appliances</p>	<p>Motor vehicles 50% more efficient than year 2000 standards within 40 years</p>
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Putting Principles into Practice – Natural Resources

Priority Areas	Economic Prosperity	Quality of life	Social Inclusion	Empowering Communities	International co-operation
All renewable resources being used only at replacement levels	<p>Business-led initiatives to ensure sustainability of fish stocks – protect key sections of food industry from decline</p> <p>Support for the fishing industry in compliance with EU restrictions, and developing alternatives</p>	<p>Ensuring sustainability of supply prevents disruption from interruptions to availability of essential resources</p> <p>Protect jobs in resource supply industries for the long term</p>	<p>Avoid rises in prices in basic materials / foods as a result of scarcity</p> <p>Involve fishing communities in development of alternative solutions and retraining opportunities</p>	<p>Provide accurate labelling on goods to encourage consumer choice</p> <p>Local Agenda 21 programmes to include a sustainable sourcing action plan</p>	<p>Negotiate with / influence countries whose industries are currently clearly unsustainable</p> <p>Support international and European agreements</p> <p>CAP reform to support organic agriculture</p>
Stable levels of material consumption per head of population, attained at reduced levels than 1998.	<p>Growth of environmentally benign forms of business – prepare businesses for future able to maximise customer service whilst minimising costs through rising prices of materials</p> <p>Reducing product miles reduces business costs</p> <p>Development of e-business culture provides competitive advantage</p>	<p>Move to service-based (rather than product sales based) business provides a model for high quality of life services with business incentives for minimising resource intensity</p> <p>Reduction of road freight improves living environment</p> <p>Development of e-business provides quick and easy ways to meet needs</p>	<p>Ensure access to computer technology for poorer section of society, to enable access to benefits of internet technologies</p>	<p>Public education on the effects of current resource consumption encourages the development of local solutions, and pressure on producers of goods and services</p>	<p>Seek international agreements to identify and monitor key resource consumption indicators on global basis</p> <p>Seek material efficiency business standards to be applied on a world basis</p> <p>Active technology transfer with developing countries to decouple benefits of development from resource intensity</p>
Stable levels of population	<p>Prepare businesses for changing demographics – implications for workforce</p>	<p>High quality family planning and education gives greater ability to make fundamental</p>	<p>Poor family planning currently affects disadvantaged communities</p>	<p>Local provision of education programmes developed based on local need</p>	<p>Take an active international role in promoting sensible practice to</p>

		life choices at the best time	more – seek to improve this through targeted programmes	Explicit and complete rejection of any approach based on coercion or illiberal measures	reduce growth in human numbers to a sustainable total
Use of non-renewable resources to be appropriate to aim of replacement or non-use.	<p>Movements by business now to reduce dependence of non-renewable resources provides competitive advantage in securing the markets of tomorrow</p> <p>Business opportunities in developing alternatives</p> <p>Recycling requirement boosts certain recycling industries</p>	<p>Proper planning for resource replacement ensures key quality of life goods / services continue</p> <p>Improved fuel efficiency reduces costs of transport and improves factors relating to health</p>	Ensure access to jobs in environmental technology industries is widened to give opportunities to people in disadvantaged circumstances	<p>Conduct 2-way dialogue with communities largely tied to industrial processes threatened by moves away from non-renewables to identify business sector solutions</p> <p>Local Agenda 21 committees to consult on sustainability indicators relating to local circumstances.</p>	<p>Encourage diversification by key multinational corporations heavily tied to exploitation of non-renewable resources</p> <p>Seek international agreements on economic instruments to encourage changes in behaviour – e.g. an air fuel tax.</p>
Waste going to landfill at 2% of 1998 levels	Landfill tax provides clear signals about destination of waste – enables business planning.	<p>Reduced number of active landfill sites improves overall amenity value.</p> <p>Support for home composting provides useful resource for gardens</p>	Tough action against fly tipping required to ensure that sensitive areas of towns (usually poorer areas) are not used as dumping grounds.	<p>Disseminate information on best practice by local authorities in achieving recycling rates</p> <p>Ensure proper consultation and involvement with local people in the rolling out of kerbside recycling schemes</p> <p>Revenue from landfill tax to go to local authorities to fund recycling</p>	Share and absorb best practice internationally

The Five Year Priorities

Sustainable Use of Natural Resources

The key short term challenges on how we use resources in the course of economic wealth creation centre on waste minimisation, with some moves towards encouraging changes in consumer behaviour towards preferences which provide high quality of life at least environmental impact.

Key priority areas are therefore:

1. Recognising that major food corporations, with their global interests and powerful influence upon their supply chain, will have a lead role to play in protecting resources where national governments have had difficulties in achieving and sustaining co-operative agreements. Moves should be made to seek business-led solutions to problems such as unsustainable fishing.
2. Establish Regional Management Boards involving all stakeholders in the fishing industry to implement plans to manage fishing along more sustainable lines.
3. There should be a national audit of timber-sourcing to provide information on the sustainability or otherwise of existing practice.
4. Encourage rapid development within the UK of an e-business culture – maximising competitive gains through the use of networking technology.
5. Establish an environmental taxation commission to provide reliable advice to government on the transition towards a tax base that – whilst being based on the taxation of “bads”, does not seek to achieve a steady level of those “bads” in order to defend the tax base.
6. Gradual increase in landfill tax to encourage alternative methods of disposal. Investment in local authority recycling solutions.
7. Increase requirements for aggregates recycling for public programmes.
8. Government programme to place focus on product-miles, and to encourage moves towards providing consumer information to encourage a greater degree of local supply chains.

Policy Framework – Use of Land Space/ Protection of Habitats

Policy Objective	Policy Proposals	Milestones
Halt the destruction of SSSIs and other key wildlife or green sites	<p>Protect existing SSSIs more rigorously from damage and enlarge the proportion of UK land under SSSI protection.</p> <p>Positively manage SSSIs to enhance their value and impose a binding “duty of care” on owners and tenants.</p> <p>Create a new designation of protected site for green areas of particular importance or value to the community with equivalent protection to SSSIs,</p>	<p>Cessation of significant damage or fragmentation of SSSI sites within ten years</p> <p>Amount of land covered by SSSI status in the UK increased by three times within 40 years</p>
Achieve a stable or increasing proportion of green land	<p>Introduce a greenfield development levy on the excess profits of property speculators to fund the renovation of damaged wildlife sites and the clean up of brownfield land</p> <p>Equalise on a revenue neutral basis VAT on new house build and renovation</p>	Overall national target of 75% of development on brownfield land within 10 years
Halt the decline in wildlife species through protecting and improving habitats	<p>Broaden the definition of hedgerows to bring a much larger percentage into the scope of hedgerow protection legislation</p> <p>Reform of the Common Agricultural Policy and the encouragement of a greater uptake of organic farming methods to halt the decline in farmland species</p>	<p>Numbers of species – decline in numbers near to zero within 40 years</p> <p>Hedgerow loss halted within 20 years</p> <p>Hedgerow cover restored to 1980 levels within 40 years</p>

Putting Principles into Practice – Land Use and Habitats

Priority Areas	Economic Prosperity	Quality of life	Social Inclusion	Empowering Communities	International action
Halt the destruction of SSSIs and other key wildlife or green sites	Protection of amenity value of key countryside areas preserves economic value of tourism for many areas	Enjoyment of amenity value of thriving and biologically diverse countryside	Local authority duty to ensure that neighbourhoods with disadvantaged communities to be supported in creating and / or designating green sites of importance	Local communities able to designate green sites of importance for protection equivalent to SSSI status. Sample of local communities to be consulted in the shape and form of the new designated status	Full and effective implementation of international treaties such as CITES and the Biodiversity Convention, providing an effective global framework for the protection of biodiversity, especially endangered species.
Achieve a stable or increasing proportion of green land	Creation of 10,000 affordable homes to rent supports construction industry Improving tax status for renovation activity boosts home improvement activity	Protection of quantity of green land improves amenity value within towns and cities as well as in the countryside	The production of good quality affordable homes to rent supports people economically disadvantaged who may otherwise be priced out of key areas	Local communities to be fully involved with the development of new homes for rent and other decisions re. greenfield / brownfield development	Examine and share best practice from other equivalent countries across the world
Halt the decline in wildlife species through protecting and improving habitats	Reform of CAP to support organic farming provides boost for key growth sector for food production – encourage major supermarkets to switch from a largely imported base to home production.	Greater levels of organic food production improves quality, choice, and price of food available Robust protection of hedgerows protects amenity value of countryside	Reform of CAP and support for organic farming supports key rural industry under pressure and particularly low income workers in rural areas	Programmes of local support for businesses to be targeted more effectively towards farms as key rural businesses	European level action to achieve CAP reform

The Five Year Priorities

Use of Land Space / Protection of Habitats

The key short-term challenges are to halt the ongoing destruction of SSSIs, to begin steps to create a national balance of green space that is valued by communities within the UK, and to move the agricultural sector away from practices that are currently leading to species loss in farmland areas.

Main priority areas are therefore:

1. Evaluate new Government legislation relating to SSSIs and strengthen if necessary. Begin process of enlarging the proportion of land covered by SSSI designation.
2. Begin consultation with local communities on the creation of the new designation of protected site for green sites of particular community value to ensure implementation reflects community wishes and aspirations.
3. Following completion of point 2, introduce new designation
4. Broaden the scope of hedgerow protection legislation
5. Equalise on a revenue neutral basis VAT on new house build and renovation.
6. Press ahead with CAP reform proposals

Policy Framework – Water Use

Policy Objective	Policy Proposals	Milestones
<p>Stabilise percentage of available water per head of population through managing demand</p>	<p>Water availability targets set at national government level against regularly monitored indicators</p> <p>Continue to introduce water metering for domestic households, with effective measures to provide security for disadvantaged people and with priority given to areas under greatest pressure on water resources</p> <p>Programme of education for domestic and business sectors on water conservation</p> <p>Grants and seed corn funding for waste reduction programmes for business that include water use</p> <p>Use Countryside Management Contracts to help farmers reduce their water use and move towards more sustainable farming</p> <p>Ensure best practice for water supply, as well as “grey water” systems, incorporated into planning requirements for new domestic and commercial buildings</p> <p>Introduce minimum standards and effective labelling for water-using appliances</p>	<p>Interim targets agreed within two years.</p> <p>Water use stabilisation within ten years.</p> <p>Water reserves per head increased by 20% within forty years.</p>
<p>Increase the efficiency of water delivery services</p>	<p>Set tough targets for water companies to reduce water wastage through leaks, improving on gains made in the last couple of years</p> <p>Cost of water abstraction to be increased over long timeframe, with a presumption against the development of new abstraction programmes</p> <p>Investment decision on infrastructure spending to</p>	<p>Leakage rates down to 20% in 10 years</p> <p>Interruptions in supply due to normal climatic conditions reduced to minimum, with increasing ability over time to meet altered conditions as a result of climate change</p>

	<p>take account of likely effects on water demand, including decisions on where to site new homes / business premises</p> <p>Strengthen OFWAT's duties in favour of the environment and sustainable development</p>	
<p>Achieve optimal water quality of rivers, waterways and coastal areas</p>	<p>Waste reduction programmes for companies to reduce emissions to waterways</p> <p>Penalise water companies that fail to reach 100 per cent compliance with discharge consents</p> <p>Investment to clean up pollution from abandoned mine workings</p> <p>Use of satellite technology to monitor environmental compliance/dumping at sea</p>	<p>No rivers in lower two categories within 10 years</p> <p>75% rivers in top category within 40 years</p>
<p>Safeguard quality of drinking water</p>	<p>Stronger controls on developments with potential to affect aquifers</p> <p>Closer co-operation between local authorities, developers, the Environment Agency and water companies to minimise impact of development on water supplies</p> <p>Continue tight regulation of water quality standards</p>	<p>Quality of drinking water indicators show stability at high levels</p>

Putting Principles into Practice – Water Use

Priority Areas	Economic Prosperity	Quality of life	Social Inclusion	Empowering Communities	International action
Stabilise percentage of available water per head of population through managing demand	<p>Waste reduction programmes for business improve competitive-ness through cutting costs</p> <p>Support for farmers reducing water use boosts rural economy</p> <p>Water metering provides lower bills for low users</p>	<p>Greater security of water supply in the face of growing unpredictability of weather patterns</p> <p>Changes to requirements in planning rules will begin to provide homes that use less water but maintain full benefits of water use</p>	<p>Utilities Resource Fund established to give grants to households unable to pay water bills – including free work to be carried out to improve the water efficiency of the household. Fund to be paid for by the water companies.</p>	<p>Enforcement of minimum standards for appliance labelling enables consumers to make more informed decisions</p> <p>Plans to be developed via Local Agenda 21 on how to meet targets, including power of decision over siting of new homes.</p>	<p>UK Government supports and encourages programmes across the world to provide water security in developing countries.</p>
Increase the efficiency of water delivery services	<p>Improvement in operating practices to reduce water company leakages reduce costs in the medium term</p>	<p>Best practice processes should lead to better – maintained pipes and preventive work, reducing inconvenience and damage caused by system failures</p>	<p>Improved efficiency of water delivery keeps costs down – ensures that consumers pay lower prices overall.</p>	<p>Requirement for companies to respond to reports of evidence of leaks within 4 hours. Penalties for unreasonable delay in responding.</p>	<p>Set up a symposium to pick up and disseminate best practice from abroad.</p>
Achieve optimal water quality of rivers and waterways	<p>Good quality infrastructure supports the use of waterways to move goods, as well as the development of riverside / canal side areas within towns for leisure.</p> <p>Waste reduction programme for businesses</p>	<p>Greater amenity value for the public with increasing quality of rivers and associated natural areas.</p> <p>Reduced health risks from poor quality water courses.</p>	<p>Poor quality waterways often flow through areas high in numbers of socially excluded people</p> <p>Seeks requirements of riverside developments to plan for social mix in use of high amenity</p>	<p>Environment Agency Local Environmental Action Plans (LEAPs) drawn up in full consultation with local people</p> <p>Local authorities to lead in approach to waterway development within towns</p>	<p>Identify and disseminate best practice from abroad</p>

	reduces costs		spaces		
Planning changes made in the light of demands on water supply.	Advance planning enables cost effective provision of water service	Reduction of pressure on water bills in areas near to limit of cost-effective water provision through proper demand management Better security of supply – even during times of drought	Chief beneficiaries of action to hold down water bills	Local authorities given more power of decision re. siting of new homes in the area. Requirement for siting to be done using full 2-way consultation process with community	Share best practice learning with water-stressed areas of the world

The Five Year Priorities

Water Use

The key short term challenges on how we use water resources focus on increasing the efficiency of delivery and managing overall demand for water by both consumers and industry. Moves need to be taken to begin the long run planning which will begin to make sufficient adaptation for the effects of climate change. Key priority areas are therefore:

- 1.** The priorities and principles set for the introduction of the Utilities Resource Fund, paid for by the water companies, to give grants to households unable to pay water bills with a two-fold aim
 - a) To help householders break the cycle of debt through counselling and short term payment of outstanding water bills.
 - b) To carry out, as a condition of receiving grant, free upgrading work to improve water efficiency of the home.
- 2.** Subject to the completion of preparation work on the Utilities Resource Fund, introduce water metering for private households.
- 3.** Set interim targets for the reduction of demand of water and for improvements in river quality
- 4.** Introduce grants and seed corn funding for waste reduction programmes for business that include water use, in line with proposals given in “Making the Environment Our Business” policy paper.
- 5.** Use Countryside Management Contracts to help farmers to reduce their water use and move towards more sustainable farming.
- 6.** Begin discussions with industry on the criteria to be used for efficiency labelling covering water use.
- 7.** Set tough targets for water companies to reduce wastage through leaks, improving on gains made in the last couple of years.
- 8.** Develop local action plans through Local Agenda 21, which will aim to show how targets on water consumption can be met.
- 9.** No major new homes development to be agreed in areas of water demand pressure without a full assessment of how the development will lead to changes in water consumption rates and how these new levels of demand will be met. This to be done through the use of local / structure plans.

This paper has been approved for debate by the Federal Conference by the Federal Policy Committee under the terms of Article 5.4 of the Federal Constitution. Within the policy-making procedure of the Liberal Democrats, the Federal Party determines the policy of the Party in those areas which might reasonably be expected to fall within the remit of the federal institutions in the context of a federal United Kingdom. The Party in England, the Scottish Liberal Democrats and the Welsh Liberal Democrats determine the policy of the Party on all other issues, except that any or all of them may confer this power upon the Federal Party in any specified area or areas. If approved by Conference, this paper will form the policy of the Federal Party, except in appropriate areas where any national party policy would take precedence.

Many of the policy papers published by the Liberal Democrats imply modifications to existing government public expenditure priorities. We recognise that it may not be possible to achieve all these proposals in the lifetime of one Parliament. We intend to publish a costings programme, setting out our priorities across all policy areas, closer to the next general election.

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Note: Membership of the Working Group should not be taken to indicate that every member necessarily agrees with every statement or every proposal in this Paper.

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