

<b>Committee(s)</b>	<b>Dated:</b>
Public Relations and Economic Development Sub-Committee	5 December 2019
<b>Subject:</b> Parliamentary Team Update	<b>Public</b>
<b>Report of:</b> Paul Double, City Remembrancer	<b>For Information</b>
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## Summary

This report updates Members on the main proposals contained in the manifestos for the forthcoming general election. At the time of writing, manifestos – or equivalents – have been published by the Brexit, Conservative, Green, Labour, and Liberal Democrat parties. Proposals of particular interest to the Corporation and to the City more widely are also highlighted.

As this report covers the period since the last meeting of the Public Relations and Economic Development Sub Committee on 5 November, and Parliament was dissolved ahead of the general election on the 6 November, this update does not cover the work of the Parliamentary Team with Parliament in the usual way.

## Recommendation

Members are asked to note the report.

## Main Report

### General Election Manifestos – General Observations

1. Brexit and the environment are at the core of the general election manifestos published so far. The Conservatives' pledge to "get Brexit done" and the Brexit Party's desire for a "clean-break Brexit" are pitched against the Liberal Democrat proposal to revoke Article 50, and the Labour and Green commitments to hold a second referendum – though in the former case Labour would first seek to renegotiate the withdrawal agreement with the EU. To tackle climate change, the Green Party manifesto outlines an ambitious Green New Deal which would reduce carbon emissions to net zero by 2030. Labour would seek to deliver 90% of electricity and 50% of heat from renewable and low carbon sources by 2030, while the Liberal Democrats set 2045 as the deadline for reducing net carbon emissions to zero. The Conservative manifesto proposes 2050 as the year by which to decarbonise.
2. None of the manifestos contain specific proposals for London, though policy in this area will doubtless be developed by each party ahead of next year's mayoral elections.

## **Brexit Party 'Contract with the People'**

3. The Brexit Party's non-manifesto has at its heart a "clean break Brexit" which would "restore faith" in UK democracy and herald "a political revolution." Proposals include the reform of the voting system to make it more representative and the abolition of the House of Lords. Civil servants would be required to sign an oath to act with political neutrality, while 'citizens' initiatives' could trigger referendums, subject to a 5 million signature threshold.
4. The Contract includes a pledge to "overhaul financial services regulation, cut red tape, [and] increase lending to SMEs," but does not provide any further details. Corporate Tax would be zero-rated for the first £10,000 of pre-tax profits, while business rates would be replaced with a "simpler system to assist small high street retailers." A points-based immigration system would be introduced to reduce migration to the UK.
5. The Contract argues that the "Brexit dividend" of money saved in payments to the EU could be invested in road and rail schemes in the regions, though HS2 would be scrapped. Housebuilding would be boosted by changing the funding model to make it easier for local authorities to borrow from central government to build council homes.

## **Conservative Party Manifesto**

6. The Conservative Party's principle manifesto commitment is to "get Brexit done." If they were to win a majority, the Conservatives would table the Withdrawal Agreement Bill in Parliament before Christmas. This would likely have to take place on the 20<sup>th</sup> or 23<sup>rd</sup> December, with a slimmed-down Queen's Speech taking place on the 19<sup>th</sup> December. The manifesto commits the Conservatives to negotiating a trade deal with the EU in 2020, and rules out an extension of the implementation period beyond December of that year. Given that the Institute for Government has calculated that EU trade negotiations typically take four years, the Conservative's policy could risk a fresh cliff-edge or no deal Brexit in January 2021.
7. Other than its commitment to "get Brexit done," the Conservative manifesto contains few headline policies. A previously announced commitment to increase police numbers by 20,000 is confirmed, as is more funding for the NHS and the introduction of an Australian-style points-based immigration system. The manifesto also promises that rates of Income Tax, VAT and National Insurance would be frozen, alongside a raise in the National Insurance threshold to £9,500. Environmental policies announced in the manifesto are less radical than the Green, Labour and Liberal Democrat proposals, with a target to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050.

## **Green Party Manifesto**

8. The Green Party's manifesto sets out its Green New Deal, via which it seeks to "tackle the climate emergency and address social justice." The Green New Deal

would invest over £100 billion a year in the UK for 10 years to reduce climate emissions to net zero by 2030. This would be achieved by meeting energy needs through the domestic production of renewable energy, decarbonising the UK economy, transforming UK industry, transport and land use, and reducing energy demand from buildings and homes. It would also see 100,000 new energy efficient council homes built per year, 700 million trees planted to absorb carbon emissions, and a Universal Basic Income of at least £89 per week introduced for every adult by 2025. Corporation tax would be increased to 24%.

9. The Green's would seek to hold a second referendum on EU membership and campaign for remain. Their manifesto includes a number of constitutional changes, including the introduction of proportional voting, the lowering of the voting age to 16, the introduction of election to the House of Lords, and the creation of a written constitution. In some previous elections, including the 2016 London Mayoral Election, the Green Party's manifesto has included a commitment to abolish the City of London Corporation and to bring the strategic functions of the City of London under the control of the Greater London Authority. This commitment has not been included in this manifesto, though may yet be included in the Green manifesto for the 2020 London elections.

### **Labour Party Manifesto**

10. The policies in Labour's manifesto seek to deliver "real change for the many and not the few." Its proposals include £130 billion of extra public spending to fund capital investment, a 4.3% increase in the NHS budget, the costs of a National Care Service, free university tuition, and 100,000 new council homes a year among other policies. The nationalisation of rail and utility companies and an increase in the minimum wage to £10 are also proposed in the manifesto. Spending commitments would be funded by increased taxes on companies and their shareholders, including an increase in corporation tax to 26%, and on the top 5% of earners (those with incomes above £80,000).
11. Among these taxes would be a financial transaction tax that would extend stamp duty reserve tax to forex spot and derivatives trades, interest rate derivatives, and commodities spot and derivatives trades at 50% of transactions costs. A discount of one-third would apply to financial firms, as financial firms have lower transactions cost. 2017 proposals to extend stamp duty to equity and credit derivatives and corporate bonds would also be implemented. The policy aims to contribute to less volatile short-term trading as well as raising £8.8 billion in 2023-4. While the FTT was not included in Labour's main manifesto, it features in the costings document published by Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell. One policy which was not costed in this document, but was nonetheless announced after the manifesto's publication, was compensation for those women born between 1955 and 1960 who have lost out monetarily as a result of changes to the pension age. Critics have argued that Labour would need to borrow the £58 billion compensation sum, thereby breaking its own fiscal rules.
12. The Labour Party would seek to secure a new Brexit deal, which would include a permanent and comprehensive UK-wide customs union, and close alignment

with the single market. This deal would be put to a legally binding referendum, which would include the option of remaining in the EU. Other constitutional proposals include the reduction of the voting age to 16, the extension of the franchise to all UK residents, the abolition of the House of Lords in favour of a senate of the nations and regions, and the convening of a constitutional convention to consider “how power is distributed in the UK today, how nations and regions can best relate to each other and how a Labour government can best put power in the hands of the people.” The possible application of this element to London (or the City) is not given elaboration.

### **Liberal Democrat Party Manifesto**

13. The central plank of the Liberal Democrat manifest is the commitment to revoke Article 50 and remain in the EU, which – the Liberal Democrats argue – would secure a “£50 billion Remain Bonus” that could be invested in public services and spent on addressing inequality and in-work poverty. The manifesto, like the Green Party’s, also seeks to tackle climate change, proposing a ten-year programme “to cut greenhouse gas emissions substantially straightaway and phase out emissions from the remaining hard-to-treat sectors by 2045.” Other headline policies include an increase in teacher numbers by 20,000, the offer of free childcare for all children with parents in work from nine months and the creation of a £10,000 “Skills Wallet” for every adult, giving them money to spend on training and education throughout their lives.
14. Economic and fiscal proposals in the manifesto include a 1p increase in income tax to fund the NHS and social care, plus the creation of a local banking sector dedicated to meeting the needs of local SMEs. Corporation Tax would be increased to 20%, and Business Rates would be replaced with a Commercial Landowner Levy. Environmental proposals include a legally binding target to reduce net greenhouse gas emissions to zero by 2045 and the introduction of a new Clean Air Act. Constitutional changes include the reduction in the voting age to 16, the introduction of proportional voting, the creation of a written constitution, and the reform of the House of Lords.

### **Appendices:**

- Appendix 1: Overview of manifestos
- Appendix 2: Manifestos grid

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## **BREXIT PARTY 'CONTRACT WITH THE PEOPLE' 2019**

The Brexit Party set themselves apart from the other main parties competing for votes at next month's election by choosing not to launch a manifesto but instead a "Contract with the People" signed by leader Nigel Farage and Chairman Richard Tice. Explaining their approach, Farage and Tice said that manifesto has become "a dirty word [and] is little more than a set of vague promises that its authors have no intention of keeping. By contrast, our Contract with the People is a targeted set of deliverable pledges."

At the heart of the contract is a "clean-break Brexit" and no extended transition period, which is, the Party argues, "crucial to restore faith in our democracy." The Contract also sets out a number of other "fundamental democratic reforms to fix our broken political system and make parliament serve the people." These include reform of the voting system to make it more representative and abolition of the House of Lords. Following the events of the summer, the Brexit Party would also reform the Supreme Court to introduce greater scrutiny over appointments—"judges who play a role in politics must be subject to political scrutiny." The Party would also seek to ensure political balance by broadening participation in the appointments commission or by conducting interviews by Parliamentary Committee.

Other commitments in the manifesto that are of interest are set out below. The Contract did not provide any further detail beyond the headline announcements.

### **Economy, Business and Taxation**

- The Party pledges to "overhaul financial services regulation, cut red tape, increase competition and boost lending to Small and Medium Enterprises" but does not give any further detail.
- Business rates replaced with a simpler system to assist small High Street retailers and leisure operators outside the M25, with any reductions funded by an online sales tax.
- Interest on student loans scrapped.
- Inheritance Tax would be abolished.
- Zero rate Corporation Tax for the first £10,000 of pre-tax profits.
- Create Freeports in certain regions to encourage investment and create new jobs.

### **Education and Skills**

- Continue to support academies and free schools
- Abolish the target to push 50% of young people into Higher Education.
- Remove the Apprentice Levy and improve tax incentives for employers to take on genuine apprentices.

### **Crime and Policing**

- Increase police numbers with more visible policing, ensure focus on combating violent crime, robbery and burglary "rather than enforcing restrictions on free speech."

### **Environment**

- Invest in the Environment by "planting millions of trees to capture CO<sub>2</sub> [and] promote a global initiative at the UN."
- Recycle UK's own waste and make it illegal for it to be exported across the world.

### **Transport and Infrastructure**

- Invest at least £50bn in local road and rail schemes in the regions.
- Cancel HS2.
- Invest in digital infrastructure by offering free base level domestic broadband in deprived regions and free Wi-Fi on all public transport.

### **Health and Welfare**

- “The NHS must remain a publicly owned, comprehensive service that is free at the point of use.”
- Where existing private initiatives have failed to deliver, they will be returned to public ownership.
- Introduce 24-hour GP surgeries to relieve the strain in A&E departments.

### **Housing and Planning**

- Simplify planning consents for Brownfield sites.
- Change the funding model to make it easier for councils to borrow from central government to build council houses.
- Accelerate infrastructure grants funding to kick start schemes of marginal viability.
- Change the process for outline planning consent.
- Introduce more flexibility on the size and type of units as part of a development.
- Allow more flexibility in the number of affordable homes within a development scheme.

### **Immigration**

- Crack down on illegal immigration and stop the human tragedy associated with human trafficking.
- Reduce annual immigration and introduce a points system “that is blind to ethnic origin.”

### **The Constitution**

- Introduce Citizens’ Initiatives to allow people to call referendums, subject to a 5 million threshold of registered voter signatures and time limitations on repeat votes

### **Public Sector and Local Communities**

- Make the Civil Service more accountable to the public by requiring civil servants to sign an oath to act with political neutrality.

## CONSERVATIVE PARTY MANIFESTO 2019

The Conservative Party's manifesto, *Get Brexit Done, Unleash Britain's Potential*, argues that by ending the "dither and delay" and getting "Brexit done", the Conservatives can focus on other priorities, such as the health service, schools and police, and in so doing make Britain "the greatest place in the world to live, to go to school, to start a family, to own a home, [and] to start a business."

After 2017's calamitous manifesto, the Conservative Party has this time opted for a cautious approach, and its proposals are notable for a lack of large spending commitments or tax cuts. Other than Brexit, the programme is incremental, including modest extra funding for the NHS, the previously announced 20,000 increase in police numbers, the introduction of an Australian-style migration system, and freezes in income tax, VAT and National Insurance. This latter policy has been criticised by the independent Institute for Fiscal Studies, which has also noted the "lack of significant policy action" in the Conservatives' blueprint for Government. While the manifesto contains a commitment for the UK to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050, there is far less focus on environmental issues than in the Labour, Lib Dem and Green proposals.

There are no specific manifesto commitments relating to London, though as with the other main parties the policy in this area will be developed ahead of the mayoral elections next year. The Conservatives, like Labour, have proposed holding a commission on constitutional matters. The Commission on the Constitution, Democracy and Rights would focus on the relationship between the Government, Parliament and the courts, the functioning of the Royal Prerogative, the role of the House of Lords, and access to justice. As such, the City Corporation does not seem likely to fall within its scope.

Other commitments in the manifesto that are of interest are set out below.

### Brexit

- The phrase 'Get Brexit Done' occurs no fewer than 23 times in the manifesto, which positions the policy as a priority. The Conservatives would put their deal through Parliament before Christmas in order to leave by the end of January.
- A trade agreement based on "free trade and friendly cooperation" would keep the UK out of the single market, out of any customs union and will end the role of the European Court of Justice.
- The trade deal would be negotiated within 2020, and there would be no extension of the implementation period beyond December 2020.

### Economy, Business and Taxation

- The Conservatives would not borrow to fund day-to-day spending.
- Income Tax, VAT and National Insurance would not be increased under a Conservative Government.
- The National Insurance threshold would be raised to £9,500 next year, with the ultimate ambition of increasing it to £12,500.
- Taxes for small retail businesses would be cut.
- A fundamental review of business rates would aim to reduce the burden on businesses.
- The Employment Allowance for small businesses would be increased.
- A Red Tape Challenge would ensure regulation is sensible and proportionate.
- The R&D tax credit rate would be increased.
- Entrepreneur's Relief would be reformed.
- Tax evasion and aggressive tax avoidance would be tackled.
- A Digital Services Tax would be introduced.

- The UK's corporate governance regime would be strengthened.
- Freeports would be opened in each of the home nations.
- National Insurance contributions for employers of ex-Service personnel would be reduced.
- Future trade deals would be tailored to the UK economy, and 80% of UK trade would be covered by FTAs by 2023, starting with the USA, Australia, New Zealand and Japan.
- The Conservatives would work on opening up global trade in services.

### **Education and Skills**

- The manifesto confirms a previously announced funding increase of £14 billion for schools.
- Teachers' starting salaries will be raised to £30,000 to attract the best talent into teaching.
- An 'arts premium' will be offered to secondary schools to fund arts, music and sport in schools.
- A £3 billion national skills fund would ensure businesses have the skills they need by providing match funding for education and training to individuals and SMEs.
- The working of the Apprenticeship Levy would be improved.
- 20 new Institutes of Technology would connect high-quality teaching in science, technology, engineering and maths to business and industry.

### **Crime and Policing**

- The Police Covenant would be put into law.
- Tougher sentencing for the worst offenders would be introduced. Child murderers would be subject to life imprisonment without parole.
- The accountability of Police and Crime Commissioners would be strengthened.
- A new national cyber-crime force would be created.
- The National Crime Agency would be strengthened.
- 10,000 more prison places would be created.
- Intentional trespass would be made a criminal offence.

### **Environment**

- The environment would be prioritised in the next Budget, funding decarbonisation schemes and R&D.
- This will deliver net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.
- A £1 billion fund would develop affordable and accessible clean energy.
- Consultation on the date for ending the sale of petrol and diesel vehicles would take place.
- An Office for Environmental Protection would be created.
- Legal targets for air quality would be introduced.
- A levy would be introduced to increase the proportion of recyclable plastics in packaging.
- Penalties for fly-tipping would be increased.
- Tougher sentences for animal cruelty would be introduced.
- Illegal smuggling of dogs and puppies would be addressed.
- A ban on keeping primates as pets would be imposed.

### **Transport and Infrastructure**

- £100 billion would be invested in infrastructure such as rail and roads.
- Rail projects would improve connectivity around Leeds and Manchester and towns in the West Midlands.



- Contactless pay as you go ticketing would be extended to almost 200 more stations in the South East, meaning almost all London commuter journeys can be completed using a contactless bank card.
- Rail franchising would be made simpler.
- HS2 would be reviewed in light of a review into its costs and timings.
- A pothole-filling programme would be launched.
- A £350 cycling infrastructure fund would support commuter cycling routes.
- Full fibre broadband would be brought to every home and business by 2025.
- No new public money would be put towards Heathrow expansion, which the manifesto describes as a private sector project.

### **Health and Welfare**

- The NHS would receive an additional £34 billion in funding per year by the end of the Parliament.
- 40 new hospitals would be built across the country.
- 50,000 more nurses would be recruited.
- 6,000 more doctors would be recruited to general practice.
- Mental health would be treated with the same urgency as physical health.
- The NHS would not be “on the table” in trade deals.
- Additional funding of £1 billion per year would be made available to improve social care, and a cross-party consensus on addressing the issue would be sought.
- A £1 billion fund would create more affordable, high-quality childcare.
- Pensioner benefits – such as the ‘triple lock’, winter fuel payment, and bus pass – would be maintained.
- The roll-out of Universal Credit would continue, with changes to help the most vulnerable.

### **Housing and Planning**

- A market in long-term fixed rate mortgages would be encouraged to reduce the cost of deposits.
- Councils would be given powers to use developers’ contributions via the planning process to discount homes in perpetuity by a third for local people who cannot otherwise afford to buy.
- A Social Housing White Paper would support the continued supply of social homes.
- Rough sleeping would be addressed by the end of the Parliament, funded by a stamp duty surcharge on non-UK resident buyers.
- The intention to build 300,000 homes of all tenures a year would be maintained.

### **Immigration**

- An Australian-style points system for immigration would be introduced, and EU freedom of movement ended.
- Special visa categories would be introduced for NHS workers, high-achieving science and technology graduates, students and those of “exceptional talent.”

### **The Constitution**

- An English Devolution White Paper would be published.
- The Fixed Term Parliaments Act would be repealed.
- Parliamentary boundaries would be updated.
- The voting age would be maintained at 18.
- A Constitution, Democracy and Rights Commission would consider the relationship between the Government, Parliament and the courts; the functioning of the Royal Prerogative; the role of the House of Lords; and access to justice.

**Public Sector and Local Communities**

- Ex-Service personnel applying for public sector roles would be guaranteed a job interview.

## GREEN PARTY MANIFESTO 2019

The Green Party has launched its manifesto, *If Not Now, When?*, for next month's General Election. The manifesto, the policies of which aim to "tackle the Climate Emergency and deliver social justice", is grouped around a number of themes, the most prominent of which is the Green New Deal. The Green New Deal would invest over £100 billion a year in the UK for 10 years to reduce climate emissions to net zero by 2030. This would be achieved by meeting energy needs through the domestic production of renewable energy, decarbonising the UK economy, transforming UK industry, transport and land use, and reducing energy demand from buildings and homes. It would also see 100,000 new energy efficient council homes built per year, 700 million trees planted to absorb carbon emissions, and a Universal Basic Income of at least £89 per week introduced for every adult by 2025.

In some previous elections, including the 2016 London Mayoral Election, the Green Party's manifesto has included a commitment to abolish the City of London Corporation and to bring the strategic functions of the City of London under the control of the Greater London Authority. This commitment has not been included in this manifesto, and was not included in the manifesto for the 2017 General Election, although the speech made by Green London mayoral candidate Sian Berry at the party's autumn conference last month indicated that the policy remained unchanged.

Other commitments in the manifesto that are of interest include:

### Economy, Business and Taxation

- The Green Party would move away from consumption and GDP as measures of economic success towards indicators of human and ecological wellbeing.
- A new public banking infrastructure would be created to deliver the Green New Deal and invest and lend at low, affordable interest rates to support the economy's environmental transformation.
- Legislation would ensure that the maximum wage paid to any member of staff within an organisation should not exceed ten times that paid (pro rata) to the lowest paid worker in the same organisation.
- Bonuses exceeding the annual wage of the lowest paid worker in an organisation would also be banned.
- Large and medium-sized companies would be required to carry out equal pay audits, and a 40% quota would be set for women on major company boards.
- Corporation Tax would be increased to 24%.
- A Consolidated Income Tax would be created from Employees' National Insurance, Capital Gains Tax, Inheritance Tax, Dividend Tax and Income Tax.
- The Income Tax threshold would be replaced with the Universal Basic Income.
- Council Tax and Business rates would be replaced with a Land Value tax, which would also absorb National Non-domestic Rates, Stamp Duty Land Tax and a number of other existing land taxes.
- The Bank Asset Tax would be increased, and a loophole in the Stamp Duty on Shares closed.
- HM Revenue & Customs would be established as an independent agency.
- The anti-avoidance principle would be entrenched in UK law, and banks would be obliged to provide information about companies automatically to HMRC.
- The Employment Allowance would be increased from £3,000 to £10,000.
- Discrimination on the grounds of gender, sexuality or race would be tackled.

### Education and Skills

- £2 billion a year would be invested in training and skills to help people access the jobs created in the transition to a low carbon economy.

- Education funding would be increased by at least £4 billion a year. Funding would be used to reduce class sizes in the long term to a maximum of 20.
- OFSTED would be abolished.
- Academisation would be ended, and schools brought back under local authority control.
- Arts and music education would be promoted in state schools.
- Charitable status would be removed from private schools, and VAT would be charged on fees.
- Undergraduate tuition fees would be scrapped, and former students who studied under the £9,000 fee regime would have their debts written off.

### **Crime and Policing**

- The number of short-term prison sentences would be reduced, and rehabilitation services offered to long-term prisoners increased.
- Youth services would receive increased investment to help turn at-risk children away from crime.
- The war on drugs would end, with problematic drug use treated as a health issue, not a criminal issue.
- The current system of drug prohibition would be replaced with an evidence-based, legalised, regulated system of drug control.

### **Environment and Transport**

- Railways would be brought back into public ownership by 2030, with new rail connections made and closed stations reopened.
- Local authorities serving urban areas would be encouraged to explore the installation of tramways.
- The installation of electric vehicle charging infrastructure would be required through the planning system.
- Low Traffic Neighbourhoods would contribute to the Vision Zero campaign for no fatalities or serious injuries arising from road traffic accidents.
- Changes to travelling behaviour would be incentivised by promoting more stay-at-home working, with working hours' heating, electricity and Wi-Fi costs reimbursed by employers for low income employees.
- Protections for the Green Belt, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Sites of Special Scientific Interest would be strengthened.
- Spending on Trident, new roads, airport expansion, HS2 and Help to Buy would be scrapped.

### **Trade and International Development**

- Foreign aid would be increased from 0.7% to 1% of GDP.
- Tackling the climate emergency and poverty would be the priorities for the international aid budget.
- Parliament would be guaranteed a vote on trade and investment agreements, which would be obliged to maintain and enhance environmental and food standards, workers' rights and minimise the environmental impact of trade.

### **Health and Welfare**

- Funding for public services would be increased, with NHS funding increased by at least £6 billion per year until 2030.
- Pensioners and the disabled would receive supplements to the basic rate of Universal Standard Income, as would those in receipt of housing benefit or with children.
- Alongside increased funding for the NSH, the Health and Social Care Act 2012 would be repealed to reduce private sector involvement in the health service.

### **Housing and Planning**

- Local authorities would be empowered to bring empty homes back into use.
- The planning system and building regulations would ensure that all new buildings, including private developments, would conform to the Passivhaus energy efficiency standard.
- Local authorities would be given the power to set their own housing targets, set planning fees and prevent land banking.
- Councils would be given clearer guidance and better training on helping the homeless, and the 1824 Vagrancy Act would be repealed.

### **Immigration**

- The Home Office would be scrapped, and replaced with a Ministry for Sanctuary to enforce migration rules, and a Ministry of the Interior to oversee domestic security.
- Income requirements for those wishing to come to the UK to join a loved one would be abolished. An immigration system would be established with no minimum income rules for visas, full workplace rights for migrants, the right to work for asylum seekers, and recourse to public support for needy migrants and asylum seekers.

### **Brexit and the Constitution**

- A People's Vote would be held to decide the way forward on Brexit. The Green Party would campaign to remain.
- The First Past the Post voting system would be replaced with a proportional voting system.
- The voting age would be lowered to 16.
- The House of Lords would be elected, with peers elected for a maximum of 10 years, and half of the House being elected every 5 years.
- A Citizens Convention would be asked to consider a written People's Constitution and Bill of Rights, and a referendum would be held on a Cornish Assembly and more powers for the Welsh Assembly.

### **Public Sector and Local Communities**

- The first past the post system would be replaced in both local and general elections.
- Voters would be asked to elect half their council every two years.
- Local government budgets would be restored, with central government funding to councils increased by £10 billion a year.
- Local authorities would be given access to a £3 billion a year Climate Adaption Fund.
- Local authorities would be supported to democratise their own processes, including introducing more participatory democracy and participatory budgeting.

## LABOUR PARTY MANIFESTO 2019

The Labour Party has launched its manifesto, *It's Time For Real Change*, for next month's General Election. Investment in public services, the nationalisation of utility companies and the railways, and an increase in the minimum wage to £10 are part of Labour's proposals "to deliver real change for the many, and not the few." £130 billion in extra public spending would fund capital investment, a 4.3% increase in the NHS budget, the costs of a National Care Service, free university tuition, and 100,000 new council homes a year among other policies. Like the Green Party and Liberal Democrat manifestos, Labour's contains policies "to tackle the climate emergency" and reduce UK emissions "substantially" by 2030. Spending commitments would be funded by increased taxes on companies and their shareholders, and on the top 5% of earners (those with incomes above £80,000).

Business groups have reacted unfavourably and the independent Institute for Fiscal Studies has argued that "it is unlikely that one could raise the sums suggested by Labour from the tax policies they set out," asserting that the tax increases needed would have to be more widely shared. In contrast, polling suggests that some elements of Labour's policies, such as free broadband, are popular with the public.

There are no specific manifesto commitments relating to London, though policy in this area will be developed in Sadiq Khan's manifesto for the mayoralty next year. While no reference is made to the City of London Corporation, given the previously expressed views of the Labour leadership it seems possible that the Corporation could come under scrutiny by the proposed Constitutional Convention.

Other commitments in the manifesto that are of interest are set out below.

### Brexit

- Labour would seek to secure a new Brexit deal, which would include a permanent and comprehensive UK-wide customs union, and close alignment with the single market. This deal would be put to a legally binding referendum, which would include the option of remaining in the EU.

### Economy, Business and Taxation

- A Real Living Wage of £10 per hour would be introduced.
- Financial services' fitness to mobilise green investment would be improved, and they would be given powers to manage the risk to financial stability posed by investment in polluting assets.
- Companies on the London Stock Exchange that failed to contribute to addressing climate change would be delisted.
- Corporation Tax would be raised to 26%.
- Income tax would be increased on those earning more than £80,000.
- Paid maternity leave would be increased to 12 months, and paternity leave doubled to four weeks.
- The option of a land value tax to replace business rates would be explored.
- Large companies would be required to set up Inclusive Ownership Funds.
- A Ministry for Employment Rights would be created to oversee "the biggest extension of workers' rights in history." Sectoral collective bargaining would be introduced.
- Employers would be required to devise and implement plans to eradicate the gender pay gap. Employers with over 250 employees (falling to 50 by 2020) would be required to obtain government certification on gender equality.
- Unpaid internships would be banned.
- Within a decade, average full-time weekly working hours would be reduced to 32 across the economy, with no loss of pay, funded by productivity increases.

- The Companies Act would be amended to require companies to prioritise long-term growth, while strengthening protections for stakeholders, including smaller suppliers and pension funds.
- One-third of board would be reserved for elected worker-directors, who would be given greater control over executive pay.
- Audit and accounting activities at the Big Four would be separated.

### **Education and Skills**

- Labour would establish a National Education Service to provide everyone with free education throughout their lives.
- Employers would be allowed to use the Apprenticeship Levy for a wider range of accredited training. A Climate Apprenticeship programme would enable employers to develop the skills needed for clean technologies.
- A “fairer” funding formula for schools would be introduced.
- KS1 and KS2 SATs would be scrapped.
- Free schools and academies would be brought back into local authority control.
- Ofsted would be replaced.
- The VAT exemption for private schools would be removed and the Social Justice Commission would be asked to advise on integrating private schools into the comprehensive system.
- University tuition fees would be abolished, and maintenance grants reinstated.
- Within 5 years, all 2, 3, and 4-year olds would be entitled to 30 hours of free preschool education per week.

### **Crime and Policing**

- 2,000 more police officers than have been planned for by the Conservatives would be recruited.
- A public health approach to substance misuse would be developed.
- The police funding formula would be reformed.
- The structure and role of the National Crime Agency would be reviewed to strengthen the response to all types of economic crime, and ensure a “modern, technologically advanced police services that has the capacity and skills to combat online crime, supported by a new national strategy on cybercrime and fraud.”
- Prison officer numbers would be restored to 2010 levels.

### **Environment**

- A Climate and Environment Emergency Bill would set binding standards for decarbonisation, nature recovery, environmental quality and habitats and species protection.
- By 2030, 90% of electricity and 50% of heat would be delivered from renewable and low carbon sources.
- A windfall tax on oil companies would help to fund action on climate change.
- A Sustainable Investment Board would bring together the Chancellor, Business Secretary and Governor of the Bank of England to oversee and coordinate sustainable investment.
- A £250 billion Green Transformation Fund will be dedicated to renewable and low-carbon energy and transport, biodiversity and environmental restoration.
- The Treasury’s investment rules would be rewritten to ensure spending is compatible with climate and environmental targets.
- A new Clean Air Act would be passed.

### **Transport and Infrastructure**

- Energy and water systems would be nationalised, along with part of BT.

- Free full-fibre broadband would be delivered to all by 2030, paid for by taxation of multinationals.
- A National Investment Bank, supported by Regional Development Banks, would provide £250 billion of lending for enterprise, infrastructure and innovation over 10 years.
- 3% of GDP would be spent on Research and Development by 2030.
- Bus networks would be brought into public ownership, and where councils take control of buses, free bus travel for under-25s would be introduced.
- Railways would be brought into public ownership and electrified.
- Electric vehicle charging infrastructure would be invested in.
- The Vision Zero approach to road safety would be adopted.
- Airport expansion would be allowed if it met Labour's tests on air quality, noise pollution, climate change obligations and countrywide benefits.

### **Health and Welfare**

- Spending on the NHS would increase by an average 4.3% a year.
- Privatisation of the NHS would be reversed.
- Annual NHS dental check-ups would be made available.
- Health and social care would be more integrated, and a National Care Service would provide free personal care, while a cap would be put on personal contributions to care costs.
- GP training places would be expanded to help provide health services closer to home.
- £1.6 billion would be made available to improve mental health services.
- £1 billion would be invested in public health, recruiting 4,500 more health visitors and school nurses.
- Prescription charges in England would be abolished.
- The Department for Work and Pensions would be replaced by a Department for Social Security.
- Universal Credit would be abolished and replaced with a new system "that treats people with dignity and respect."
- A pilot Universal Basic Income scheme would be launched.
- The Local Housing Allowance would be increased, and the 'bedroom tax' scrapped.
- The state pension age would not be increased above 66, with retirement ages reviewed for physically arduous and stressful occupations.

### **Housing and Planning**

- A £75 billion housebuilding programme would deliver more than a million social homes over a decade, with 100,000 a year built by councils for social rent, and 50,000 for housing associations.
- The definition of affordable housing would be replaced with a definition linked to local incomes.
- Permitted development rights for office buildings would be scrapped.
- The Right to Buy would be ended.
- Local people would be given "first dibs" on new homes build in their area.
- Rent controls would be introduced to cap rents by inflation. Cities would be given the power to cap rents further.
- Homes would be upgraded to the highest energy-efficiency standards. A zero-carbon standard would be introduced for new homes.
- Local authorities would be given greater freedom to set planning fees.
- Rough sleeping would be ended by 2025.
- The Vagrancy Act would be repealed.



### **Immigration**

- The immigration system would be reformed and rebuilt to prioritise human rights and meeting skills and labour shortages in the economy.
- In the event of Brexit, the Labour Party would seek to protect free movement rights for UK citizens and EU nationals.

### **The Constitution**

- A Constitutional Convention would consider “how power is distributed in the UK today, how nations and regions can best relate to each other and how a Labour government can best put power in the hands of the people.”
- The voting age would be reduced to 16.
- The franchise would be extended to all UK residents.
- The House of Lords would be reformed, with the hereditary principle ended. Labour would work to abolish the House of Lords in favour of a Senate of the Nations and Regions.
- Directly elected mayors would be made more accountable to local councillors and elected representatives.
- Four new bank holidays for the patron saints of the home nations would be introduced.

### **Public Sector and Local Communities**

- The public sector pay cap would be scrapped.
- The presumption in favour of outsourcing public services would be replaced by a presumption in favour of insourcing.
- A £150 billion Social Transformation Fund would be used to replace, upgrade and expand schools, hospitals, care homes and council houses.
- Public sector pay levels would be restored to pre-financial crisis levels (in real terms), starting with a 5% pay increase for public sector workers.

## LIBERAL DEMOCRAT PARTY MANIFESTO 2019

The Liberal Democrats have launched their manifesto, *Stop Brexit: Build a Brighter Future*, for next month's General Election. The central plank of the manifesto is the commitment to revoke Article 50 and remain in the EU, which – the Liberal Democrats argue – would secure a “£50 billion Remain Bonus” that could be invested in public services and spent on addressing inequality and in-work poverty. The manifesto, like the Green Party's, also seeks to tackle climate change, proposing a ten-year programme “to cut greenhouse gas emissions substantially straightaway and phase out emissions from the remaining hard-to-treat sectors by 2045.” Other headline policies include an increase in teacher numbers by 20,000, the offer of free childcare for all children with parents in work from nine months and the creation of a £10,000 “Skills Wallet” for every adult, giving them money to spend on training and education throughout their lives.

There are no specific manifesto commitments relating to London, though Liberal Democrat policy in this area will be developed in their manifesto for the mayoral campaign next year. Other commitments in the manifesto that are of interest are set out below:

### Brexit

- In the event of a Liberal Democrat majority, Article 50 would be revoked so that the UK remains in the European Union. In other circumstances, the Liberal Democrats will continue to campaign for a people's vote with the option to stay in the EU.
- A £50 billion ‘Remain Bonus’ will be invested in public services and tackling inequality.

### Economy, Business and Taxation

- 1p on Income Tax, raising £7 billion a year, ringfenced for spending on the NHS and social care.
- A Wellbeing Budget, like that of New Zealand, would be introduced so that decisions are based on wellbeing as well as economic and fiscal indicators.
- A local banking sector dedicated to meeting the needs of local small and medium-sized businesses would be created.
- The British Business Bank would be expanded to perform a more central role in the economy. Its support for venture capital funds would be reformed to allow it to help funds ‘crowd in’ new backers rather than acting as a funder of last resort.
- Local industrial strategies to incentivise clustering by businesses and universities with specific specialisations.
- A start-up allowance would be created to help those starting a business with their living costs.
- Mentoring support would be provided to fast-growing businesses seeking to scale up.
- SMEs would be prioritised in the roll-out of hyper-fast broadband.
- To promote responsible capitalism, employers would be encouraged to promote employee ownership, and worker participation in decision-making would be strengthened. Shareholder votes on executive pay policies would be binding.
- A general duty of care for the environment and human rights would be introduced, requiring companies, financial institutions and the public sector to exercise due diligence in avoiding activities such as modern slavery or deforestation in their supply chains.
- Corporation Tax would be increased to 20%.
- Business Rates in England would be replaced with a Commercial Landowner Levy based on the land value of commercial sites.
- Capital gains and salaries would be taxed through a single allowance to tax income from capital more fairly compared to income from work.
- Business taxation would be simplified to lower administration costs.

- To tackle corporate tax evasion, a General Anti-Avoidance Rule would be introduced, and the Digital Sales Tax would be “improved”.
- An independent review would consult on how to set a Living Wage across all sectors.

### **Education and Skills**

- A £10,000 Skills Wallet would be given to every adult for education and training (£4,000 at age 25, £3,000 at 40 and £3,000 at 55).
- The apprenticeship levy would be expanded into a wider Skills and Training Levy, with 25% of funds going to a Social Mobility Fund for areas with the greatest skills needs.
- To support the tech sector, core skills such as logic, verbal reasoning and creativity will be taught in schools.
- A UK-wide target for digital literacy would be set “to ensure that everyone can enjoy the benefits of new technology.”
- 20,000 extra teachers would be employed, and funding made available to repair school and college buildings.
- Mandatory SATs would be scrapped, and Ofsted replaced with a new HM Inspector of Schools.
- The English Baccalaureate would be abolished to promote arts and creative subjects in schools.
- Multi Academy Trusts would be obliged to undergo external inspections.
- Teachers’ starting salary would be increased to £30,000, and all teachers’ pay would be increased by at least 3% per year throughout the Parliament.

### **Crime and Policing**

- £1 billion would be invested in policing to provide two new police officers in every ward.
- A public health approach to youth violence would be adopted.
- 2,000 more prison officers would be recruited. A presumption against short sentences would be introduced.
- Cannabis would be legalised, and the lead department for drugs policy would be the Department of Health.

### **Environment**

- A legally binding target would be set to reduce net greenhouse gas emission by 2045.
- Renewable power would provide at least 80% of UK electricity by 2030.
- Local authorities would be given a statutory duty to produce a Zero Carbon Strategy.
- A statutory waste recycling target of 70% would be set in England, with separate food waste collections extended to 90% of homes by 2024.
- A new Clean Air Act, based on WHO guidelines, would be passed, enforced by a new Air Quality Agency.
- All companies registered in the UK and listed on UK stock exchanges would be required to set targets consistent with the Paris Agreement on Climate Change and report on their implementation.
- Financial services would be regulated to encourage green investments.
- £5 billion of capital for a new Green investment Bank to attract private investment for zero carbon priorities.
- 60 million trees would be planted a year to absorb carbon, protect wildlife, and improve health.

### **Transport and Infrastructure**

- £130 billion would be invested in infrastructure – in transport, energy, schools, hospitals and homes.
- The manifesto commits to HS2 and Crossrail 2, and other strategic rail routes.
- The rail network would be converted to use ultra-low emission technology.

- All new cars will be required to be electric by 2030.
- No expansion of Heathrow or other London airports; a moratorium on the development of net new runways in the UK.

### **Health and Welfare**

- 1p on Income Tax would raise £7 billion a year, ringfenced for spending on the NHS and social care.
- Mental health would be treated with “the same urgency” as physical health.
- Free childcare for children of working parents would be made available from 9 months.
- £6 billion would be invested in the benefits system to help those who need it. The wait for first benefits payments would be reduced from five weeks to five days.

### **Housing and Planning**

- Direct spending on housebuilding to help create 300,000 homes a year by 2024, including 100,000 social homes.
- A programme to insulate all Britain’s homes by 2030 to cut emissions and address fuel poverty.
- Full control of Right to Buy would be devolved to local authorities.
- Financial resources would be given to local authorities to deliver the Homelessness Reduction Act.
- The Vagrancy Act would be repealed.

### **Immigration**

- Tier 2 visas would be replaced with a “more flexible” merit-based system.
- A new two-year work visa for graduating students would be introduced.
- Responsibility for work permits and student visas policy would be moved to the Departments of Business and Education respectively.

### **The Constitution**

- Proportional voting would be introduced via the Single Transferable Vote system.
- The voting age would be reduced to 16.
- A written constitution for a federal UK would be written.
- The House of Lords would be reformed with “a proper democratic mandate”.

### **Public Sector and Local Communities**

- Local authorities would be given powers to bring in tourism levies and fund local tourism infrastructure.
- Local authorities would be given enhanced powers to call on new income sources appropriate to their area to support local services and investment.