

THE LIBERAL PARTY

Motions passed at Special Assembly - 1st February 2020

Land Value Tax

“And as wealth consists of materials and products of nature which have been secured, or modified by human exertion so as to fit them for the satisfaction of human desires, labor is the active factor in the production of wealth, but land is the passive factor, without which labor can neither produce nor exist.” Henry George, 1883.

1 The Liberal Party notes the ongoing increased property prices which have grown
2 160% since 1996 and that rental prices in the UK continues an unsustainable
3 trajectory. Property and land value increase is a significant factor in economic and
4 social polarisation. Supply of housing through new building development has
5 become the hallmark policy “solution” to the housing crisis. However, there is no
6 evidence that this is reducing housing prices nor accessibility to the market; but
7 rather increasing capital returns on land acquisition by property development
8 speculators and the further impingement of developments into former green belt
9 areas and common land. The Liberal Party recognises that the underlying cause of
10 property price growth is directly related to increasing value of land, which remains
11 an untaxed asset and base resource.

12 Although 63% of households in the UK own their homes, this constitutes only 5% of
13 land in the UK. After Government, Forestry Commission, Church and Trust lands
14 have been taken into consideration, half of the land in England is owned by
15 approximately 25,000 people (less than 0.5% of the population) and half of land in
16 Scotland is owned by an estimated 450 people (less than 0.01% of the population),
17 while much ownership in Wales remains unaccounted for.

18 Assembly moves:

19 a) to develop its policy position on a Land Value Tax (LVT) for the 21st century,
20 which will help to redistribute the tax burden from earned economic activity

21 (labour) such as income tax to the unearned exploitation of land resources;
22 which will in-turn help to relax property value increases;
23 b) to research and develop a comprehensive LVT tax system as part of review
24 of income, revenue and inheritance taxation; to include the following
25 considerations:
26 i. that any LVT should include 0-rate relief of owner-occupier farmers
27 ii. that regulations should prohibit passing LVT burdens from landlords
28 to tenants
29 c) for closer active cooperation and association with organisations which
30 research and promote New Georgist principles in promoting radical Liberal
31 reform for sustainable livelihoods and environments for future generations,
32 such as the Henry George Foundation.

Post-Brexit Farm Subsidies

1 The Liberal Party notes the potential social and economic impacts of Brexit to
2 farmers and rural communities, through exiting the Common Agricultural Policy
3 mechanism. But also recognises the opportunity this give the UK to reform
4 agricultural policy in a way that is fairer for all, more efficient and more
5 environmentally sustainable; and which will potentially open-up new markets.

6 The Liberal Party notes that under current EU regulations many major landowners,
7 who's main economic activity is not involved in farming have also continued to be in
8 receipt of Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) subsidies. The Liberal Party considers
9 that a policy intended to support farmers who would otherwise struggle under
10 current market conditions should not end-up distributing greater wealth to
11 already wealthy landlords and landowners. This is an unfair and a wasteful use of
12 public monies.

13 Assembly welcomes Government proposals to reduce post-Brexit continuity
14 subsidies to large landowners and the phased introduction of environmental
15 contracts, with the following conditions:

- 16 a) that reduced subsidies for larger landowners are based on proper means
17 tests taking into consideration use of land and other income; rather than only
18 by current size of subsidies;
- 19 b) environmental contracts are built and developed on models such as the
20 Exmoor Ambition, which reflect the complexity of farming economies,
21 promote cooperative partnerships and long-lasting sustainability

Trespass Laws – Referred back to Policy Committee for July Special Assembly

Local & Regional Government - Referred to Policy Committee

Smaller Hospitals

- 1 The Liberal Party notes the Nuffield Trust's recommendations for improving acute
2 care in smaller hospitals, but that the government has made no commitment to the
3 continued provision and/or re-institution of smaller hospitals.

- 4 Investment in smaller regional hospitals not only ensures better A&E and acute care
5 to small and remote communities, but will also reduce ambulance costs, relieve
6 pressure and waiting times in larger hospitals and increase overall efficiency across
7 all hospital sites.

8 Assembly moves:

- 9 a) for urgent increased investment in smaller localised hospital to provide
10 A&E and acute care services.