

MOTIONS CARRIED
at the
132ND LIBERAL ASSEMBLY
held in
BRISTOL
on
14th OCTOBER 2017

CROSSRAIL NORTH

The Liberal party notes with dismay the recent announcement by the Government to cancel vital rail electrification schemes in the North of England. This was then followed by the Secretary of State for Transport announcing the Government's support for the 'Crossrail 2' project in London. Council notes that according to the HM Treasury figures the Government spending on transport per person is six times higher in London than in the North of England. Assembly believes this spending approach is not just unfair but also likely to damage the economy as a whole on the basis that a lack of investment in transport infrastructure in the North is holding back economic growth that region.

Assembly believes that significant investment in transport infrastructure is vital to rebalance the British economy and prevent further imbalance in wealth and prosperity between North and South.

With this in mind assembly calls on the Government to commit to develop and deliver “Crossrail for the North” (also known as Northern Powerhouse Rail or HS3) a new high speed rail network linking the key cities of the North from Liverpool to Hull, as the next national infrastructure priority.

Assembly believes that this is vital to produce faster journeys for passengers and increase rail capacity for the movement of goods and freight as a key part of a low carbon future for our country.

Assembly further notes the significant economic boost that this infrastructure will deliver as work commissioned by the Combined Authority indicates that the Liverpool to Manchester leg of 'Crossrail for the North', with a link onto HS2, is estimated to deliver around £16 billion of economic growth to the local (and ultimately national) economy.

SUPPORT FOR 'CANZUK'

In the light of the British people's decision to leave the European Union, the UK must seek out new trade deals as part of the Country's post-Brexit economic policy.

With this in mind Assembly supports the campaign by 'Canzuk International' to forge closer links between Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the UK.

Such links would include:

- i. Free Trade between these countries (including mutual recognition of each country's national standards);

- ii. Free movement of people between the countries (based on the Trans-Tasman Travel Agreement between Australia and New Zealand);
- iii. Greater co-operation in Defence and Foreign Affairs;

Assembly believes that it is essential that the constituent members countries of any 'CANZUK' grouping remain independent autonomous sovereign states.

THE COMMONWEALTH

The Liberal Party rescinds its support for a 'Commonwealth of Democracies' on the basis that there is no such international demand at present, and no existing structures in place around which such an organisation could be built. Assembly does, however, believe that the Commonwealth of Nations could and should develop into a broader structure by changing its criteria to welcome and include countries who do not have a historical link to the former British Empire but share the other key criteria established at the Kampala

Review, specifically:

- i. an applicant country should accept and comply with Commonwealth fundamental values, principles, and priorities as set out in the 1971 Declaration of Commonwealth Principles and contained in other subsequent Declarations;
- ii. an applicant country must demonstrate commitment to democracy and democratic processes, including free and fair elections and representative legislatures; the rule

of law and independence of the judiciary; good governance, including a well-trained public service and transparent public accounts; and protection of human rights, freedom of expression, and equality of opportunity;

- iii. new members should be encouraged to join the Commonwealth Foundation, and to promote vigorous civil society and business organisations within their countries, and to foster participatory democracy through regular civil society consultations.

The Liberal Party welcomes the inclusion of Mozambique and Rwanda into the Commonwealth of Nations

WATER RESOURCES

The Liberal Party calls for a national debate on the management and conservation of water resources in this country.

The UK's subterranean water resources face excessive exploitation both from extraction for domestic use and the potentially harmful effects of high pressure water injection for shale gas fracking.

There is a pressing need for a higher profile for the oversight of the extraction, storage and delivery of such a precious natural resources and to reduce losses in transit.

The building of selective regional water distribution system's to alleviate localised shortfalls in rainfall and the resulting environmental stress, would provide for much needed infrastructure investment.

Water is a natural asset which needs to be managed both to the benefit of society and the natural environment.

LEASEHOLD REFORM

Assembly notes that the Liberal Party was the first to adopt a leasehold reform policy in recent times.

However recent scandals have called into question the long term residential lease system, unique to England and Wales, which is increasingly labelled as feudal. A reforming Act of Parliament is likely in the next session. Liberals call for it to include

- a) compensation for all leaseholders caught up in recent scandals,
- b) a temporary provision to make it possible for an individual living in a flat to buy his or her lease,
- c) a temporary provision that all leases ending before 2025 revert to the leaseholder, not the freeholder, with fair compensation if appropriate,
- d) a provision that, by 2025, would convert leasehold into 'commonhold', the system extant in most of the rest of the world, where leases are held by residents or do not exist.

LEAVING THE EUROPEAN UNION

The Liberal Party regrets the actions of certain 'Remainers' within Her Majesty's Government, and others, to delay and thwart the wishes of the majority in the 2016 European Union Referendum.

Assembly therefore calls for:

- i. All political parties to respect the decision taken by the majority in the 2016 referendum and not seek to subvert or frustrate the principle that the UK will leave the EU in 2019;
- ii. H.M. Government to continue the process of the United Kingdom leaving the European Union by 2019, and to make urgent preparations for the possibility of no 'deal' with the EU being in place at by that time.

EXTRADITION REFORM

The Liberal Party calls for a total review of extradition procedures in the UK and for the introduction of the following principles:

1. No party to be extradited for questioning upon a matter, if a the law enforcement officers of a country wish to interview or question a party it may be done in the UK under the supervision of UK police. Extradition should only be granted when there is a firm case that passes the test for prosecution set by the CPS in the UK and with the assurance that any trial will be commenced within 116 days of the person being extradited.
2. No party to be extradited for any offence where the substantive grounds for

the extradition would give rise to grounds for prosecution for an offence in the UK.

3. No party to be extradited for any offence where the offence alleged would not be classified as an offence if committed in the United Kingdom or where due to the passage of time could not now be prosecuted in the United Kingdom.
4. No party to be extradited for any offence unless the extraditing power can assure the UK government that the extradited party shall have access to full and competent legal representation free of charge.

CATALONIA

The Liberal Party supports the right of peoples to chose their own destiny, both individually and collectively. To this end the Liberal Party supports the 'right of self - determination' of all peoples, insofar as the same is consistent with the rule of law and such rights are exercised peacefully.

The Liberal Party is thus concerned and dismayed by the response of the Spanish government to the 'referendum' held in Catalonia recently.

In particular the Liberal Party condemns the actions of the national police forces in attempting to stop citizens voting by the use of violence. Whatever the precise legal status of such a referendum, voting is an inherently peaceful action (even if only as a form of protest) and should not have been met with a violent response from the state.

PSYCHIATRIC HEALTH PROVISION

Assembly notes with alarm the recent 'Struggling to Cope' report (UNISON 2017) which reveals a 25% increase over four year in attacks on staff working in the field of mental health.

We reiterate our call for greater provision of long and short term residential care for patients with psychiatric illness along with increased investment in community care, with the aim of allowing health professionals to take a more pro-active and interventionist approach to treatment of mental health problems. Further, such investment should aim to see a reduction in the use of temporary and agency staff within the sector.

Assembly believes that in the medium term such investment is likely to be close to costs neutral, as savings will be made as a reduction in the number of staff assaults, criminal activity, homelessness and crisis interventions.