

How Devolution Can Drive a Green Revolution

This morning, Acting Leader Ed Davey addressed the Local Government Association's online conference. He spoke about the crucial role of local government – not just in keeping our communities safe during this coronavirus pandemic, but also in building a fairer, greener, more prosperous country as we emerge from this crisis.

Here are the highlights from his speech...

On the work of local authorities during the pandemic:

Local authorities are the key institutions that enable our communities to come together and deliver the vital services people need.

Even as coronavirus has caused unbearable heartbreak and hardship, it has been truly uplifting to see the great work councils right across the country are doing to support local people...

This pandemic has highlighted something the Liberal Democrats have always understood: local authorities are the key institutions that enable our communities to come together and deliver the vital services people need. That's true in "normal" times, and it's even more important in a crisis like this.

Yet, sadly, this Conservative Government still doesn't seem to get it. The truth is, local leaders should have been part of the Government's decision-making since the very beginning of this crisis – as the Liberal Democrats have been calling for all along.

It's just so damaging – especially in a crisis like this – to have a Government that thinks of local authorities as at best an irrelevance and at worst an impediment.

£45 billion for councils to spearhead a green recovery:

With these powers and funding, councils would all be able to take a real lead in the fight against climate change.

The recovery must not undermine the fight against climate change: it must strengthen it.

If we truly integrate economic policy with climate policy, we could make the

rapid progress we need for our planet. And we could rebuild our economy and get people back to work.

But it requires nothing less than a Green Revolution.

That's why I have called on the Government to invest £150 billion – 150, not the paltry 5 billion Johnson promised last week – over the next three years on a Green Recovery Plan. On insulating homes. On green transport. On renewable energy. On restoring lost biodiversity.

Much of this would best be delivered by local government.

That's why today I'm calling on the Government to provide £45 billion of green recovery investment over the next three years directly to local authorities, to fund: home insulation programmes; new bus and cycle routes; light rail and tram lines; tree planting and nature restoration; community energy projects; electric vehicle charging infrastructure; and other projects to cut emissions and create green jobs in your community.

And the Government must match that funding with the extra powers local authorities need.

With the new powers I'm proposing and £45 billion of new green funding, councils would all be able to take a real lead in the fight against climate change.

A Devolution Revolution to drive the Green Revolution.

On the pressures local authorities are facing – especially social care:

The Government must work with all parties – and with local government – to build a sustainable future for social care services across the country.

On a whole range of issues, this Government expects more and more from local authorities while giving them less and less. Handing councils responsibility for some of the toughest challenges, without also handing over the power or funding they need to tackle them.

Nowhere – nowhere – is this attitude more evident than in social care. Caring for the elderly, the disabled and the vulnerable is a fundamental duty of government. It speaks directly to who we are as a country and the caring society we want to build.

I know the frustration so many councillors have – that they can't provide the level of care they know is needed because of how drastically the Government is underfunding social care.

The immediate gap in social care funding must be plugged, now. And

Government must work with all parties – and with local government – to build a sustainable future for social care services across the country.

Our fight to empower local authorities:

Fixing the crisis in social care. Tackling the climate emergency. Addressing deep-seated inequalities in our society. Rebuilding our economy after the coronavirus pandemic. These are enormous challenges. They will take ambition, determination and innovation.

They cannot be solved by a new announcement from the Government, a new piece of legislation in Parliament, or a new set of guidelines from Whitehall – important though they might be.

They can only be solved if local authorities are empowered – through devolution of funding and devolution of control – to make the decisions and implement the changes that our communities need.

That's something the Liberal Democrats have been fighting for throughout our history. It's part of our DNA. And we will not give up that fight.

“We need to rebuild our economy, get people back to work and protect the future of our planet. And that means nothing less than a Green Revolution.” – [@EdwardJDavey](#) ▶ <https://t.co/68tl44Podz>

– Liberal Democrats (@LibDems) [July 7, 2020](#)

[Go to Source](#)

Author:

Migrant women must be protected in the Domestic Abuse Bill

The landmark Domestic Abuse Bill is due to be passed by the House of Commons today.

Survivors desperately need the new legal protections and support that this Domestic Abuse Bill will bring.

More than two million people experience domestic abuse every year. Survivors

desperately need the new legal protections and support that this Domestic Abuse Bill will bring.

The Conservative Government has been far too slow bringing this legislation forward since they first promised it more than three years ago.

I'm relieved that our cross-party pressure has paid off and the House of Commons will finally have the chance to pass this long-awaited and landmark legislation today.

I'm also delighted that we have succeeded in ensuring that the Bill properly recognises children as victims of domestic abuse.

We must ensure that the Bill protects all survivors of domestic abuse, no matter where they were born.

Liberal Democrats' will continue to try and improve the Bill further.

Among the amendments we will be tabling are two which protect migrant women who experience domestic abuse.

One to grant them leave to remain in the UK and the other to prevent their personal data being shared with the Home Office for immigration enforcement.

We must ensure that the Bill protects all survivors of domestic abuse, no matter where they were born.

Today our cross-party pressure has paid off and the House of Commons will finally have the chance to pass the long-awaited Domestic Abuse Bill.

We are continuing to work to improve the Bill, with amendments to add specific protections for migrant women. <https://t.co/apkmHzUfVi>

– Liberal Democrats (@LibDems) [July 6, 2020](#)

[Go to Source](#)

Author:

[Craft our vision for the world after](#)

Coronavirus

Coronavirus has changed the world we know in so many ways and has highlighted many problems within British society.

As Liberal Democrats, we've always looked to the future with hope to build a better world – and we want you to be part of crafting our vision for the world after Coronavirus.

[Go to Source](#)

Author:

UK Government must act swiftly on Hong Kong

This new law crushes what was left of the 'one country, two systems' framework.

It destroys Hong Kong as we know it.

The UK government must now act swiftly to uphold the promises we made during the Handover.

The people of Hong Kong must immediately be given the right to live in the UK, with a pathway to citizenship. It is not good enough for this offer to only apply to BNO status holders and their dependents, as the Government have so far suggested. This leaves behind many young Hong Kongers who have been at the centre of the calls for democracy.

This new law destroys Hong Kong as we know it.

The UK government must now pass our Bill to give BNO status holders the right to live in Britain permanently & open the scheme to those born after 1997. <https://t.co/uT2z0sCq5n#StandWithHongKong>

✉ <https://t.co/WxMbVbhHB8>

– Liberal Democrats (@LibDems) [June 30, 2020](#)

The Government need to go further. All Hong Kongers must have their rights and freedoms protected, regardless of BNO status.

Liberal Democrats are urging the UK government to ensure that no one is left behind.

It is time to step up and stand with Hong Kong.

[Go to Source](#)

Author:

Immigration Bill: Our fight to prevent another Windrush Scandal

Today, Priti Patel is pushing her damaging Immigration Bill through the House of Commons.

We need a fair immigration system that treats everyone with dignity and respect.

By ending EU free movement, the Conservatives would both make it harder for doctors and nurses to come to work in the NHS and charge them thousands of pounds in fees for the privilege.

They would make it virtually impossible to recruit social care workers from overseas. And they would hurt employers across the UK, just as they are working to recover from the coronavirus crisis.

Meanwhile, they are doing nothing to dismantle the Hostile Environment, which has caused people who have every right to live in the UK to be wrongly denied healthcare, made homeless, detained and even deported – as the appalling Windrush Scandal showed.

We need a fair immigration system that everyone can have confidence in and that treats everyone with dignity and respect.

So Liberal Democrats are opposing the Tories' destructive plans and arguing instead for fair, effective and compassionate fixes to the system.

We have tabled a package of amendments to the Immigration Bill that would:

We are opposing the Conservatives' destructive immigration plans and arguing instead for fair, effective and compassionate fixes to the system.

- Require the Government to **implement the recommendations of the Windrush**

Lessons Learned Review in full before ending free movement, including a full review of all Hostile Environment policies.

- **Repeal the Right to Rent scheme**, part of the Hostile Environment under which landlords face up to five years in prison for renting to someone without the necessary immigration status, and which has been proven in court to cause racial discrimination.
- **Give EU citizens living in the UK before Brexit the automatic right to remain** and require the Government to provide them with physical proof of their rights.
- **Repeal the immigration exception in the Data Protection Act**, which enables the Home Office to collect and process personal information from other public bodies – such as schools, the NHS and the police – for the purposes of immigration enforcement without individuals knowing about it.
- **Lift the ban on asylum seekers working** if they have been waiting for the Home Office to decide their claim for more than three months.

We are also supporting cross-party amendments that would:

We owe it to the victims of the Windrush Scandal to ensure that nothing like it ever happens again.

- **End indefinite detention**, which is inhumane, expensive and unnecessary.
- **Protect the rights of unaccompanied child refugees** to be reunited with family members in the UK.
- **Reduce the fee for registering a child as a British citizen** from £1,012 to the actual cost of processing the application.
- **Give visa extensions to all the foreign nationals working in health and social care** during the coronavirus pandemic.
- **Exempt people coming to work in the NHS and social care** from paying the Immigration Health Surcharge.

We owe it to the victims of the Windrush Scandal to ensure that nothing like it ever happens again.

That's why, as Priti Patel pushes ahead with her disastrous plans to end free movement, Liberal Democrats are fighting to end the Hostile Environment and fix the broken immigration system.

[Go to Source](#)

Author: