

I've told Britain's property developers: if you won't build houses, the Lib Dems will

The Conservative government has given developers a carte blanche to play the property market at the expense of our citizens. And now the country's in crisis.

Not enough homes. Properties sitting empty. Exorbitant prices. The market is closed and exclusive: a fat cats' game. That's not good for people and it's not good for business.

Today the Lib Dems are laying down the law to developers: **unless you build the homes that Britain needs, we will.**

We're tired of the commercially unsound and short-sighted greed of developers, who buy up local authority land and sit on it until it appreciates. We're tired of absent foreign investors, who's attractive up-front cash is a false economy – contributing nothing to the improvement of the surrounding public realm.

The Lib Dems are taking decisive action on the housing crisis.

As a modern, pro-business party, we think commercial sense and social justice go hand in hand. That's why we've put a progressive housing package at the heart of our new manifesto. It will include: building 300,000 homes a year by the end of the next parliament and giving local councils the power to charge absentee landlords up to 200% council tax on empty homes.

Why prioritise housing?

Making sure that the housing market is both profitable and socially beneficial is just pure good sense. But I also have personal reasons for standing behind this issue. As a teenager, I was inspired to get into politics by watching *Cathy Come Home* – a heartbreakingly moving film about a couple who were made homeless – and I joined the housing charity Shelter as a result.

As an MP, I've seen first-hand the misery caused not having a proper home. For many people in the next generation, it is virtually impossible to get on the housing ladder. I think they deserve a helping hand.

If you want a government who will fight for everyone's basic human need for shelter, who has the commercial clout to unpack the property monopolies which hold the market in a vice, then add your name here and say you're voting to change Britain's future on Thursday 8th June:

The unregulated cannabis market is harming our young people. Something must be done.

The Liberal Democrats plan to break the grip of criminal gangs and protect young people by introducing a legal, regulated market for cannabis.

Why are we doing this?

Because the current approach to cannabis has been a catastrophic failure.

Unregulated cannabis is freely available and widely used, generating significant mental and psychical health problems – especially for young people – who are being harmed by increasingly potent products.

And because organised criminals are making huge profits at the expense of people's health, in an illegal industry with no age checks, and no controls on quality or strength. The UK cannabis economy is worth an estimated £7bn a year. We could put that money to better use.

Every British government so far has passed the buck of responsibility for this problem, thereby giving total control to the illegal rings who benefit from it. This is irresponsible and dangerous.

It's time for an honest and pragmatic response. Only the Lib Dems can do this.

We propose a series of strict regulations, such as limiting sales of cannabis to over-18s, making cannabis safer by limiting its psychoactive chemical content, and taxing all cannabis sales (generating up to £1bn for investment in drug education and treatment).

How do we know it will work?

We've rigorously consulted a panel of experts, including senior police officers, drugs policy analysts and public health experts. They considered evidence from countries who've successfully legalised cannabis.

When a country as eminently sensible as Canada has come to the conclusion that regulation is better than prohibition, you know that the tide has turned. The question is now how to regulate responsibly and effectively. We can do it.

If you believe Britain's young people deserve a sensible, progressive policy on cannabis, support us today:

Lib Dems offer 'daddy month' of paid parental leave for new fathers

The Liberal Democrats will introduce an additional month of paid parental leave especially for fathers to encourage greater sharing of parental responsibilities.

The policy will build on our achievement of introducing Shared Parental Leave in order to ensure that new parents can make the decisions which work best for their family.

Jo Swinson, who introduced the original Shared Parental Leave in the Coalition Government, said:

“The Liberal Democrat introduction of Shared Parental Leave was a massive step towards more equal parenting, and recognising the vital role that fathers play. Parents across the UK have already benefitted from greater flexibility and freedom in how they share the care for their new baby.

“But more needs to be done in order to encourage men to take leave when they become a dad, to bond with their child during the early weeks and months of their life. Research shows that fathers being more involved in their children’s lives is good for children’s development and good for the health and happiness of the whole family.

“That is why the Liberal Democrats want to give dads across the country the chance to spend more time with their children.

“A vote for the Liberal Democrats is a vote to change the direction of this country. If you want an open, tolerant and united Britain, this is your chance.”

Susan Kramer, Liberal Democrat Shadow Business Secretary, said:

“Creating a fair system for parents everywhere not only benefits new mums and dads but also helps our business sector.

“Having a workforce that is both more flexible and more motivated will benefit UK businesses greatly.

“It is the Liberal Democrats who are standing up for fairness and flexibility for parents. Theresa May has never cared.”

Ending an historic injustice in mental health care

Excellent healthcare is at the heart of our vision for Britain. As a leading liberal democracy, our public services should – and can be – the envy of the world. The Lib Dems are committed to making this vision a reality.

Last weekend, Tim Farron and I announced our five point NHS and care recovery plan, which laid out our health strategy for the next parliament – generating an extra £6bn funding boost.

Today, we are proud to announce that £1bn of this money will be ring-fenced and dedicated to 12 key priorities in mental health.

These priorities include improving waiting time standards for mental health care on the NHS, providing support for pregnant women, and trebling the number of people accessing psychological therapies.

You can read the [full report here](#).

Why are we doing this? Because services have been stretched to breaking point under the Conservatives, and promises made under the coalition have been broken. Now people's lives are at stake.

The Lib Dems believe that every progressive, future-facing country should prioritise the mental health of its people.

If you share this vision, support us today:

Our ambitious new plan for refugees

I passionately believe that the British people are open, tolerant and progressive. That's what I love about us. But lately I've felt the country slide into a Britain I don't recognise – a Britain that's closed, insular and suspicious.

The Conservatives are largely to blame.

Their treatment of refugees – especially child refugees – is despicable and shameful. Faced with the biggest global trauma since the Second World War, Theresa May has torn up her promises and turned her back on the most vulnerable people in the world.

How will future Britons judge us?

The Liberal Democrats believe that as an advanced liberal democracy we must have compassion for those in need. The world looks to Britain as a leader in global business and a guardian of progressive values. We are proud of that.

That's why, while visiting a refugee charity in Cheltenham today, I announced our plan to fly in the face of Theresa May's callousness: we will take 10,000 refugees from Syria every year in the next parliament, and help find homes for asylum seeking children stranded in Europe.

This will ease some of the suffering caused by Conservative cold-bloodedness – going some way to redress the injustice of Theresa May's repeated U-turns and broken promises on refugees. It's the decent thing to do. It's the right thing to do. And it's the patriotic thing to do.

We want Britain to be an open-hearted and forward-looking world leader, not a provincial and miserly island on the fringes of Europe.

If you share this vision, support our refugee plan and vote Lib Dem on 8th June.