**Election 2017: Liberal Democrats Manifesto**

**Overview:**

Liberal Democrat leader Tim Farron launched his party’s manifesto this morning, putting Brexit at the heart of their election promises by proposing a second EU referendum on the Brexit deal. Farron is pitching for the vote of Remainers and soft Brexiteers who do not share Theresa May’s Brexit vision, hoping to achieve the same results from this year’s earlier by-election in Stoke-on-Trent, not from the most recent council elections across the UK. Lord Newby, the Lib Dem Leader in the House of Lords, denied that offering a second referendum on Brexit was “electoral suicide” on BBC 4.

In a narrative similar to the Scottish Conservatives at the last Holyrood elections, the Lib Dems have explicitly pitched themselves as the only credible Opposition to Theresa May’s Conservative Party. In admitting the Conservative Party will win the election they risk alienating some traditional voters but capitalizing on potential wavering Labour votes.

The Lib Dems’ main policies include a 1% increase of income tax (raising £6bn for NHS and social care services). In a manifesto prioritising welfare, the Lib Dems say they will end the 1% public sector pay cap and invest £7bn extra in education.

Their spending pledges amount to £14bn a year, a moderate amount compared to the £48bn spending put forward in the Labour manifesto. Former Business Secretary Sir Vince Cable highlighted the “fully costed” policies of the party.

**COMPARING THE PLANS: SPENDING**

![Comparison Chart](source:libdems/labour)

*Source: Twitter, @EdConwaySky*

But what inevitably captured the media attention was the legalization and taxation of cannabis, raising £1bn in tax revenues.
Key Policies:

**Tax and Business:**
- Initiate a 1p rise on the basic, higher and additional rates of Income Tax in order to raise £6bn for the NHS and social care services
- Raise the inheritance tax threshold
- Reverse cuts to the following taxes: corporation tax from 20% to 17%, capital gains tax, marriage allowance.
- Reform the corporation tax to develop a system that benefits the poorest
- Act to tackle corporate tax evasion and avoidance
- Create a new “start-up allowance” for new businesses
- Review business rates

**Employment:**
- Defend social rights such as maternity leave
- 40% of women board members in FTSE 350 companies

**Health:**
- Initiate a 1p rise on the basic, higher and additional rates of Income Tax in order to raise £6bn for the NHS and social care services
- End the 1% public sector pay cap
- Publish a National Wellbeing Strategy, which puts better health and wellbeing for all at the heart of government policy.
- Introduce a statutory independent budget monitoring agency for health and care, similar to the Office for Budget Responsibility.
- Move towards single place-based budgets in local authorities for health and social care by 2020
- Create a cross-party health and social care convention to bring together stakeholders to discuss greater integration and long-term sustainability
- Match mental health care waiting times to those in physical health care
- Limit the amount the elderly have to pay for social care
- Implement the recommendations of the O’Neill report on antimicrobial resistance
- Protect NHS whistle-blowers
- Develop a strategy to tackle childhood obesity, including restricting the marketing of junk food to children, restricting TV advertising before the 9pm watershed and closing loopholes in the sugary drinks tax.
- Encourage the traffic-light labelling system for food products and publication of information on calorie, fat, sugar and salt content in restaurants and takeaways.
- Introduce mandatory targets on sugar reduction for food and drink producers.

**Welfare:**
- Spending £9.7bn on benefits in total
- Reverse cuts to work allowances in universal credit and housing benefit for 18-21 year olds

**Early Years:**
- Increase Early Years Pupil Premium to £1,000 per pupil per year
- Extend free childcare to all two-year-olds and to the children of working families from the end of paid parental leave
- Extend free school meals to all children in primary education and promote school breakfast clubs
• Ensure that by 2022 every early years setting employs someone with an early years teacher qualification
• Introduce an additional month’s paid paternity leave for dads
• Take 13,000 children out of poverty by letting both parents earn before their Universal Credit is cut

Brexit:
• Offer a second referendum on Brexit deal
• Maintain membership of the single market and customs union
• Maintain the existing EU environmental standards in UK law, especially in climate and energy policy
• Fight to ensure current social rights and entitlements, such as 52 weeks’ maternity leave, are maintained
• Ensure the City of London retains its rights as Europe’s financial capital in the EU financial markets

Education:
• Invest nearly £7bn extra in school and college budgets
• End 1% cap on teachers’ pay rises
• Improve vocational education opportunities, including skills for entrepreneurship and self-employment
• Double the number of businesses which hire apprentices by extending them across new sectors, such as creative and digital industries.
• Restore university maintenance grants for poorest students
• Oppose new selective schools
• Include promoting wellbeing as a statutory duty of a school, to be part of the Ofsted inspection framework.

Housing:
• Build 300,000 homes a year by 2022
• Grant £5bn of initial capital for a new British Housing and Infrastructure Development Bank
• Pass a Green Building Act to ensure every home in England reaches at least an energy rating of Band C by 2035
• Ensure at least 4 million homes are made highly energy efficient (Band C) by 2022
•Enable local authorities to levy up to 200% council tax on second homes and “buy to leave empty” investments from overseas

Infrastructure:
• Commit to a £100 billion package of additional infrastructure investment, prioritizing the direct spending on housebuilding in order to build over 300,000 per year by 2022, as well as significant investment in rail and road infrastructure.

Transport:
• Invest in road and rail infrastructure, continued commitment to HS2, Crossrail 2 and rail electrification
• Take over the running of Southern Rail and Govia Thameslink
• Oppose expansion of Heathrow, Stansted or Gatwick – instead focus on improving existing regional airports such as Birmingham and Manchester

Defence and Foreign Policy:
• Spend 2% of GDP on defence
• Spend 0.7% of gross national income on aid

Immigration:
- Unilaterally guarantee the rights of EU nationals in the UK and urge the same rights for UK citizens living in European Union countries
- Offer asylum to 50,000 Syrian refugees over 5 years

Constitutional Issues:
- Grant vote rights for 16-year-olds
- Reform the House of Lords with a proper democratic mandate
- Cap donations to political parties at £10K per person per year