

Liberal Democrat Environment Challenge

- 1 Introduce a Carbon Tax**

We would protect the global environment from climate change through a tax on carbon and by seeking global agreements on contraction and convergence.
- 2 Tax high polluting vehicles**

We would reward motorists who drive less-polluting vehicles by reducing car tax (Vehicle Excise Duty) on more environmentally friendly cars and motorcycles, abolishing it altogether for the greenest vehicles, funding this by increasing the amount of VED charged on the most polluting vehicles, such as 4x4s.
- 3 Introduce a Plastic Bag Tax**

Set at 10p per bag, it could raise up to £800 million per year that could be directly channelled (hypothecated) into sustainable waste management.
- 4 Introduce a charge on all aircraft departing British airports**

We would scrap all airport departure taxes paid by passengers which simply raise money for the treasury and do not encourage more sustainable aviation. We would replace this with a fairer system, placing a duty to be paid by airlines for each commercial aircraft – passenger and freight (which pay nothing under the current system) - taking off from a British airport.
- 5 Make building regulations tougher**

We would cut fuel bills and reduce pollution by requiring all new housing to meet improved energy and water efficiency standards through the use of environmentally friendly building materials and techniques. We would also cut VAT on energy savings materials from the current 17.5% to 5%. We would also work in the EU to allow energy saving materials to be zero-rated.
- 6 Increase fines for polluters**

We would improve the enforcement of pollution controls through an expanded inspectorate for the Environment Agency, to support full implementation of the statutory pollution control regime. This will be reinforced by increasing the level of penalties which polluters have to pay and the introduction of legislation on corporate environmental liability.
- 7 Move towards water metering for all**

We would encourage the use of water meters for domestic households in areas with scarce supplies, with effective measures to provide security for disadvantaged people.
- 8 Set long-term targets for greenhouse gas emissions and renewable energy**

Our long-term target is for a 60% reduction in Carbon Dioxide emissions by 2050. We go beyond the existing government target of 10% of UK electricity to be generated from renewable sources by 2010 by setting targets of 20% for 2020 and 50% by 2050. As part of this we would extend the existing Renewables Obligation on electricity suppliers so that 20% of electricity must be sourced from renewables by 2020.
- 9 Phase out Nuclear Power**

We will phase out existing nuclear power stations at the end of their safe operating lives, and wind-up the THORP and MOX plants as soon as it is practical to do so.
- 10 Become more accountable to the public**

We would publish a full 'Green Budget' assessment of every budget. This will ensure that environmental priorities are at the heart of government spending plans, and that the Chancellor is held to account for making economic policy more sustainable. In addition an Environmental Responsibility Act will set out reporting requirements and environmental standards for government and businesses, and introduce environmental audits across all government departments and local authorities where this is not already done.