

2001 General Election: 4 party manifesto analysis - the environment agenda

Introduction

During General Elections, there is an agenda that dare not speak its name - the environment agenda. Senior Labour and Conservative politicians go out of their way to suppress all reference to their track records, and future intentions. Their manifestos refer to environmental protection, but usually in the blandest manner. Targets, along with specific policies and timetables to achieve them, are notable by their absence. There are no press conferences called. And, the press pack trot along with the charade.

The media and political pundits are as disinterested as Labour and Tories. They happily rabbit on about the parties' contrived stunts, campaign trail gossip and how boring it all is, while studiously ignoring the best efforts of two other national parties - the Liberal Democrats and the Greens - to make this agenda count as it should. Don't take our word for it.

Loughborough University published a detailed media analysis of neglected election issues in The Guardian (May 28th): environmental issue coverage manages a pathetic 0.8% of all stories.

Typically, Election 2001 coverage has quickly settled into mind-numbingly conventional patterns, and the endless reworking of traditional themes: education, tax, Europe, the NHS, immigration. Electoral debate is predetermined by editorial diktat and political connivance. Of course, these familiar policy areas are important, and of keen public concern. But so is the environmental agenda - that cluster of vital issues that significantly affect every aspect of the economy and society.

Taken as a whole, the adverse impacts of anti-environmental energy, transport, resource use, agriculture and land-use policies cause tremendous social and economic problems. Think of industrial agriculture, BSE and foot and mouth; of the chaos on our transport systems; of the fiascos of BNFL and nuclear power; of the growing mountains of waste; of the threats posed by climate change, sea-level rise and frequent extreme weather events.

Conversely, solving environmental problems brings tremendous economic and social advantages: to competitiveness, efficiency, employment, company and household running costs, public health, poverty relief, quality of life and standards of living - let alone leaving a world worth inheriting for future generations.

So why no intelligent analysis of the threats caused by environmental degradation, and the alternative ways of resolving them? Why no leadership from virtually all mainstream politicians - Charles Kennedy so far being a notable exception - about this critical agenda? Why no persistent challenges from the press corps about energy choices to combat climate

change ... or policy options for dealing with genetically engineered crops, foods and other products ... or using taxes to penalise polluters ... or reducing soaring traffic levels and congestion, and modernising the railways and bus networks ... or boosting organic production which consumers want to buy, instead of importing while British farmers go out of business ... or tackling the hopeless and expensive inefficiency of polluting and resource wasteful factories ... or correcting the failure of Britain PLC to capture share in booming markets for environmental technologies ... or preventing the wholesale extinction of species and eradication of precious wildlife habitats ... or repelling the pervasive invasion of our bodies by toxic synthetic chemicals ... or reducing ever-growing mountains of waste by something other than hugely unpopular incinerators ... or the small matter of the UK's grossly unequal and unsustainable consumption and pollution trends.

These things matter hugely. As do the positions and policies - or the lack of them - in all the main party manifestos.

Outlined below is Friends of the Earth's comparative analysis of the Labour, Conservative, Liberal Democrat and Green Party 2001 General Election manifestos. We have ranked and scored them according to what we believe are the most important policy yardsticks. We have also looked for specific commitments, targets and time-scales to achieve them; and judged whether each manifesto makes the economic and social arguments for delivering a positive environmental agenda.

We have selected 50 key environmental yardsticks, covering 10 main policy areas. The yardsticks cover economic sectors (eg. agriculture, transport, energy), and policy agendas (eg. tax and spending, corporations, overseas development). We have taken manifesto statements and commitments at face value in assigning marks. The headline results are as follows:

LABOUR SCORE	=	23 / 50
CONSERVATIVE SCORE	=	6½ / 50
LIBERAL DEMOCRAT SCORE	=	37½ / 50
GREEN PARTY SCORE	=	42 / 50

ANALYSIS: While it is not so surprising that the **Green Party** are the winners, with the strongest set of 'environment and sustainability' pledges, two headline conclusions are immediately obvious: 1) the **Liberal Democrats** have easily the strongest green commitments of the three major parties, scoring consistently highly in most areas and come a very close second to the Green Party itself; 2) the **Conservatives** have an abysmal manifesto, judged by sustainability and environmental criteria.

Other details include: **Labour** score on many yardsticks, but often only ½ points because their commitments are generally worded and vague. **Labour** score relatively highly on greening: 2) Agriculture and Countryside and 8) Tax and Public Expenditure. **Labour** score poorly on: 3) Transport, 4) Waste Management, 5) Pollution and Public Health and 7) Corporations and Business. **The Conservatives** are the only party to score '0' in any of the 10 sections, scoring 'nul' points in: 5) Pollution and Public Health, 7) Corporations and Business, 9) Greening Government, and 10) The Global Agenda.

Friends of the Earth's priorities for a green manifesto - General Election 2001

Putting environmental concerns at the heart of policy-making is a key requirement for sustainable development. Doing so delivers measurable and significant economic and social gains. For example, there are many opportunities to create large numbers of new jobs - skilled and semi-skilled - from the FOE manifesto priorities outlined below. Similarly, thought-through action programmes to resolve many types of pollution and resource waste problems directly and substantively improve the quality of life, and standards of living, for poorer communities - who generally suffer the worst effects of environmental degradation. Environmental regulations, pollution taxes and public spending on environmental technologies, products and infrastructures should all be used to achieve policy goals.

1. Climate change, fuel poverty and energy production

FOE's Manifesto Priorities for Climate Change and Renewable Energy

- a) commit to ratify and enforce the Kyoto Protocol (1 point)
- b) meet the government's target for 20% cuts in 1990 CO₂ emissions by 2010 (1 point)
- c) set a long-term reduction target of 60% cuts for all greenhouse gases by 2050 (1 point)

To be achieved by:

- a) commit to boosting investment in renewable energies, such as off-shore wind, solar (homes and offices), biomass and wave power supplies (1 point)
- b) commit to reduce emissions from road and air transport (1 point)
- c) set a target of generating 20% of electricity from renewables by 2010, including a target of 100,000 solar roof homes by 2005 (2 points)

FOE's Manifesto Priorities for Energy Conservation and Fuel Poverty

- a) commit to end fuel poverty in the UK (1 point)
- b) commit to a nation-wide energy conservation/efficiency programme, including boosting Combined Heat and Power supplies (1 point)

FOE's Manifesto Priorities for Nuclear Power

- a) commit to building no new nuclear stations (1 point)
- b) end reprocessing at Sellafield (THORP and MOX) within five years (1 point)
- c) contain nuclear waste safely above ground, and focus BNFL business on safe waste management, clean-up and decommissioning nuclear plant (1 point)
- d) phase out all radioactive discharges to the sea by 2020 (1 point)

TOTAL = 13 points

THE MANIFESTOS:

LABOUR: The Labour manifesto [p. 41] pledges to meet “our obligations” under the Kyoto protocol but not ratify (½ point), cut CO2 emissions by 20% by 2010 (1 point), and aims to meet a 60% CO2 reduction target (not all greenhouse gases) by 2050 (½ point). It commits to a “radical” agenda for a low carbon economy, £700 million for renewable energy (1 point), and support for cleaner fuels and engine technologies for vehicles (but no mention of air transport emissions) (½ point). It sets [p.13] a target of 10% of UK’s electricity from renewables by 2010, and will consider further targets (½ point). Labour will double the contribution of CHP (½ point), and double expenditure on energy efficiency (½ point) so no “vulnerable” homes risk ill-health from cold by 2010 - which is not the same as eradicating fuel poverty (½ point). The manifesto comments on the “important” role of nuclear power, but “insists” BNFL must “maintain the highest health, safety and environmental standards” (½ point).

LABOUR SCORE = 6/13

CONSERVATIVE: The manifesto has few specifics, and no specific relevant targets. It does say that a Conservative government will “meet the commitments made by successive British governments by a comprehensive package of emission permit trading, energy conservation measures, tax incentives, greater encouragement of renewable energy and cleaner energy generation” [p. 39]. Taken at face value, that means implementing the Kyoto protocol obligations, but necessarily the protocol per se (½ point), the 2010 CO2 target (1 point) and 10% renewables target (½ point), all target commitments in the previous government’s Climate Change Strategy. The role of nuclear power in cutting CO2 emissions will be reviewed [p. 17].

CONSERVATIVE SCORE = 2/13

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT: The manifesto [p. 19] commits to meeting the Kyoto protocol target (½ point), and the 20% CO2 reduction target by 2010 (1 point); and, to switch [p. 13] from polluting energy to clean energy sources (½ point) and boosting renewables (1 point). The Liberal Democrats commit [p. 9] to cleaner and more fuel efficient vehicles, including zero emission vehicles (½ point). The manifesto [p. 13] requires a minimum of 10% of energy from renewables by 2010, increasing by 1% a year thereafter (1 point). There will be a homes insulation programme [p.10] “throughout the housing market”, and a comprehensive strategy so everyone can have a warm home to eradicate fuel poverty (1 point). It promises [p.13] mandatory energy efficiency standards and labels on buildings, machinery, vehicles and appliances to reduce energy use, and support for CHP (1 point). Liberal Democrats will decommission and “phase out nuclear power” [p. 13], which must cover reprocessing, and spread good practice on decommissioning; while committing [p.17] to meet OSPAR discharge targets by 2020 (3½ points).

LIBERAL DEMOCRATS SCORE = 10/13

GREEN: The Green Party has targets [p. 10] to reduce all greenhouse gas emissions by 20% by 2005, and by 20% per decade afterwards until net zero emissions by 2045. This meets Kyoto obligations (but again, not necessarily through the protocol per se) and other FOE priorities above (2 ½ points). Incentives, and planning regulations for new buildings, will boost renewables like wind, solar and biomass (1 point). Emissions from land and air transport [p. 7 and 10] will be covered (1 point); and a target of supplying 25% of energy

from renewable sources by 2010 (1 point). There are commitments [p. 10] to nationwide energy conservation and efficiency programmes, and boosting CHP production (1 point). There is no explicit commitment to end fuel poverty, or specific solar homes target (both only implied). Nuclear power and reprocessing will be decommissioned “as soon as possible” and safe storage of nuclear waste prioritised, while “reducing hazardous substances in water to natural levels by 2020” [p. 11] (3 ½ points).

GREEN PARTY SCORE = 10/13

2. Agriculture and countryside

FOE’s Manifesto Priorities for Farming

- a) produce a White Paper on Sustainable Farming, with reform of Common Agriculture Policy to increase support for organic and least chemical use systems, local agricultural economies and best practice animal welfare and wildlife management (1 point)
- b) increase area devoted to organic production to 30% by 2010 (1 point)
- c) continue the GM commercial moratorium, until GM foods and crops are shown to pose no threats to environmental and human health (1 point)
- d) reform of the Common Fisheries Policy to conserve stocks, stop over-fishing and encourage a sustainable fishing industry (1 point)

TOTAL = 4 points

LABOUR: There is no promise of a White Paper, but an independent commission [p. 15] will advise on how to create a “sustainable, competitive and diverse farm sector, which advances environmental, health and animal welfare goals” (½ point). Labour will seek a “radical” reorientation of the CAP away from European production subsidies towards national domestic and environmental farming, to sustain and improve the environment; organic payments will be increased from the current £18 million, and the foot and mouth recovery plan will advise on organic conversion (½ point). There will be “high standards” of safety for GM foods and crops, and strict regulation to protect the environment and promote public health and consumer choice (½ point). The CFP will be reformed to conserve stocks; a decommissioning scheme introduced, and the problem of quota-hoppers tackled (1 point).

LABOUR SCORE = 2½/4

CONSERVATIVE: The manifesto [p. 37] promises reform of the CAP to “provide sustainable long-term support for farming, and protect the environment and the countryside” (½ point). Conservatives will “improve animal protection and welfare by building on the successes of the last Conservative government” to raise animal welfare standards in Europe; and will reform the CFP to insist on national or local controls over fishing in British waters (½ point).

CONSERVATIVE SCORE = 1/4

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT: The manifesto ([p. 17] promises to reform the CAP to promote the “sustainability” of agriculture, support small and family farms, organic farming and “high

animal welfare standards”, and achieve environmental goals (½ point). Liberal Democrats will seek a “moratorium” across the EU on commercial growing of genetically modified crops until 2004, to complete environmental and safety impact research (½ point). CFP will be reformed to conserve “the marine environment” and integrate fishing community needs, agree sustainable management zones, and extend national protection zones, including Fishing Free Zones to allow stocks to recover (1 point).

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT SCORE = 2/4

GREEN: The manifesto [p. 8] endorses a “right” to eat wholesome food and end animal exploitation; the CAP to be phased out, dumping of EU surpluses in developing countries ended, and national controls to ensure farm spending on income support, and strong environmental and animal welfare; factory farming to end, with subsidies to shift farmers to humane husbandry (½ point). An Organics Target Bill will set a 30% organic production target by 2010, and 50% reduction in pesticide use by 2005 (1 point). The import and production of GM food and animal feed should be banned (1 point). The EU’s total allowable catch must drop by 40% for stocks to recover, with local and national control ensuring marine ecosystem and migratory fish protection, including no fishing in spawning grounds during breeding season (1 point).

THE GREENS SCORE = 3½/4

3. Transport

FOE’s Manifesto Priorities for Roads and Public Transport

- a) set a statutory national road traffic reduction target of 10% on 1990 levels by 2010, with mechanisms to achieve (1 point)
- b) recreate a publicly controlled and accountable railway network and operations, with substantially increased investment in public transport (1 point)
- c) build no new roads or road developments that threaten nationally protected wildlife areas (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) and National Parks (1 point)
- d) commit to European pollution taxes on aircraft fuel (1 point)

TOTAL = 4 points

LABOUR: The manifesto [p. 12] sets no road traffic reduction targets, although traffic-free Home Zones will be expanded and local authorities can use congestion charges to reduce traffic levels, if the money is recycled back into public transport (½ point). Of the £180 billion over ten years for transport investment, £60 billion will be spent upgrading the rail network, the national bus fleet will be “renewed” by 2006, and walking and cycling encouraged in “thousands” of local transport schemes (½ point). A “hundred new bypasses” will be built, with new roads being “strictly appraised for minimum environmental damage (½ point). “Plans” for aviation and airports over the next 30 years will be produced in 2002.

LABOUR SCORE = 1½/4

CONSERVATIVE: The manifesto [p.39] states that the party is not “anti-car” but “anti-

pollution”, and will set out “long-term investment plans for roads and public transport” (but no spend figures). A new Roads Standards Unit will aim to take traffic out of towns and villages, and “minimise the environmental effects of roads” (½ point). The railway industry will be revived to “achieve airline standards of service and safety”.

CONSERVATIVE SCORE = 1½/4

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT: Manifesto policies [p. 8] are designed to “reduce the need to travel”, with new Regional/Local Transport Plans to reduce congestion, pollution and traffic growth” and new legislation to set “stronger targets” for local authorities to reduce road traffic (½ point). The regulatory system for public transport will be reformed through a new Sustainable Transport Authority with oversight responsibilities; Railtrack will become a not-for-profit organisation, restructured “under a public interest reference”; and, increase public transport investment through bonds, and recycled congestion/parking tax revenues (1 point). Plans to build “new roads in environmentally sensitive areas” will be “reversed” (1 point). International reform of aviation fuel taxation will go through the EU, to “reduce energy use and pollution”(1 point).

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT SCORE = 3½/4

GREEN: The manifesto [p. 7] promises “binding targets for traffic reduction”, green transport plans to reduce car commuter trips, and planning reforms to reduce the need for travel (½ point). Railtrack will be “renationalised”, and the government’s £180 billion ten year transport plan redirected towards “accessible” public transport, an expanded rail network, improved conditions for cyclists and pedestrians, “radically improved” bus services and “dramatically improved” rural public transport (1 point). Aviation fuel “should be taxed to reduce demand” and greenhouse gas emissions (1 point).

THE GREENS SCORE = 2½/4

4. Waste management

FOE’s Manifesto Priorities for Minimising Waste

- a) set long-term (up to 2050) natural resource use reduction targets, to ensure that UK consumption is globally equitable and within environmental limits (1 point)
- b) impose a moratorium on new incinerators until minimum 60% recycling/reuse targets for domestic and municipal waste are achieved (1 point)
- c) provide every household with a doorstep recycling service, to recycle 50% domestic waste by 2010 (1 point)

TOTAL = 3 points

LABOUR: The manifesto [p. 41] pledges to meet “tough national targets for environmental protection”, promises the development of new “environmental productivity indicators” because it is “imperative” to “use natural resources more efficiently and recycle more”; (alongside the 2050 60% CO2 reduction target) (½ point). 35% of household waste will be recycled by 2015, and Labour will “work with all local authorities to introduce kerb-side

recycling schemes wherever appropriate (½ point).

LABOUR SCORE = 1/3

CONSERVATIVE: There is nothing in the main manifesto relevant to this section. The Conservative Local Election manifesto does commit to “doorstep recycling for all households, with new resources to councils to help fund such schemes” (1 point).

CONSERVATIVE SCORE = 1/3

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT: The manifesto [p. 17] makes no mention of long-term resource use efficiency targets, outside of additional 1% a year CO2 emission reductions after 2010, while it [p. 20] supports “green technology and new environmental industries”. There will be no new incinerators unless research shows that they are safe and “the best environmental option” (½ point). There will be a National Recycling Programme for a doorstep recycling collection for every household by “the end of the next Parliament”, with 60% of household waste recycled by 2010 (1 point).

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT SCORE = 1½/3

GREEN: There are no explicit long-term resource use reduction targets, apart from the important greenhouse gas emission commitment to make cuts “based on carbon justice - equity between rich and poor”, so that emissions are capped equally on a per capita basis [p. 10], and the recognition of environmental system limits [p.11] in using a “critical load” approach for reducing air and water pollution (½ point). The manifesto states that “waste incineration must be phased out” (1 point), and “at least 60% of domestic waste should be recycled by 2007” (1 point).

GREEN SCORE = 2½/3

5. Pollution and public health

FOE’s Manifesto Priorities for Pollution Control

- a) commit to public health policies based on a precautionary approach to curbing pollution (1 point)
- b) phase out all known hormone-disrupting chemicals and pesticides, and synthetic chemicals which build up in the environment and human bodies (1 point)
- c) produce a comprehensive strategy to phase out all toxic chemicals by 2015 (1 point)
- d) back statutory rights to environmental information (on the state of local and national air, water and land quality, and polluting emissions) and peaceful environmental protests (1 point)

TOTAL = 4 points

LABOUR: The manifesto pledges [p.15] an independent advisory commission on farming and food policy which “advances environmental, health and animal welfare goals”, and states that “Labour is committed to a healthy environment” [p. 41] (½ point); but there is no reference to

a preventative, precautionary approach as the basis for health policy (continuing to reflect the Department of Health's perverse rejection of precautionary environmental policies to improve public health). There is no reference to precise forms of toxic chemical control, and only general intentions to ensure farm production "sustains and improves the environment", encourage organic conversion, and set "high standards of safety" over GM foods and crops to "protect the environment and promote public health" (½ point).

LABOUR SCORE = 1/4

CONSERVATIVE: Apart from the very general intention to reform the CAP to help "protect the environment", there are no relevant passages in the manifesto for this section.

CONSERVATIVE SCORE = 0/4

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT: The manifesto recognises [p. 3] that preventative action to clean up the environment improves public health, and promises such health-related environmental action in housing, and curbing vehicle and industrial pollution (1 point). They also pledge [p. 7] to improve pollution control enforcement through an expanded inspectorate for the Environment Agency. The Liberal Democrats pledge [p. 13] to "end UK production and use of persistent bio-accumulative chemicals" (½ point); as well as to "ban the use of the most toxic chemicals" (½ point). The manifesto promises [p. 15] a "right to environmental information" as part of a Freedom of Information law, and a right to "legal and peaceful protest on all issues" (1 point).

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT SCORE = 3/4

GREEN: The manifesto recognises that preventative action to cut pollution and waste improves public health (1point). It states that "strict limits must be set for pollutants, using the critical load approach for air pollution, and reducing hazardous substances in water to natural levels by 2020". The manifesto [p. 11] pledges to phase out "all toxic and hormone disrupting chemicals" (1 point), and the "chemical industry converted to bio-degradable substances by 2020" (1 point). The Greens want [p. 16] the Freedom of Information Act reformed and written constitutional rights, but do not specify environmental rights, such as the right to state of the environment information or peaceful protest.

GREEN SCORE = 3/4

6. Wildlife and countryside protection

FOE's Manifesto Priorities for Wildlife and Landscape Protection

- a) ensure that at least 75% of all new build housing is on 'brown-field sites' and empty building conversions (1 point)
- b) ensure effective and comprehensive implementation of habitat protection laws, including positive management agreements (1 point)
- c) stop water company activities and other damaging developments threatening wetlands, rivers and coastal waters (1 point)
- d) ensure British-based companies and City financial institutions

stop supporting destructive projects in protected biodiversity areas overseas, and curb the illegal timber trade internationally (1 point)

TOTAL = 4 points

LABOUR: The manifesto states [p. 14] that 60% of all new build will be on brown-field sites, or provided through conversion (½ point). It states [p. 15] Labour’s “determination to protect Britain’s landscapes and wildlife”, using “planning, transport and energy policy” (alongside farm subsidies for environmental improvement); and, [p.41] that Labour will “work to improve marine and forest conservation overseas and in the UK” (1 point). Water management is a “vital challenge for the future - for the environment”, and Labour will continue with its £8 billion programme for water companies to clean up rivers and minimise damage from waste (½ point). The manifesto points [p. 40] to Labour’s promotion of “socially responsible business” overseas, but does not refer to similar environmental responsibilities.

LABOUR SCORE = 2/4

CONSERVATIVE: Once again the manifesto looks decidedly thin. It states [p. 38] that planning will be streamlined to make it easier to build on brown-field sites, and give local councils powers to declare new local green belts. It states [p. 39] that “Conservatives believe each of us should act as a steward preserving and enhancing the natural world and built environment for future generations”, and claims [p. 37] that its “policies on transport, crime, planning and Europe will all benefit the countryside”. The Conservatives pledge [p. 38] they “will take action to protect our rivers, wetlands, lakes, canals and coastline from development by establishing “Blue Belt” areas”, equivalent to Green Belts on land (1 point).

CONSERVATIVE SCORE = 1/4

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT: The manifesto does not set a target for brown-field use, but will [p. 17] “protect green-field sites and encourage urban regeneration” through taxation (a Greenfield Development Levy) and planning, and require landlords to bring empty homes back into use (½ point). New measures include conservation management schemes, under a ‘Wildlife Guarantee’ to protect endangered species, a Protected Site designation (equivalent to Sites of Special Scientific Interest) for local green areas, and CAP reoriented Countryside Management Contracts; and, a binding ‘Duty of Care’ on owners and managers of SSSIs will enhance their environmental value (1 point). There will be a new national oceans and coasts policy to improve wildlife protection, including a network of Marine Protected Areas, with flood-plain protection from future developments (½ point). More officers [p. 15] will be provided to HM Customs to enforce the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, and stronger EU action to enforce international environmental conventions, such as endangered species protection (½ point).

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT SCORE = 2½/4

GREEN: There are no targets for brown-field site building, but local authorities will use “Empty Property Use Orders” to bring empty homes into use; tax measures would encourage urban regeneration and empty property occupation (½ point). Alongside marine and river pollution restrictions, EU wildlife protection legislation will be fully enforced, alongside

mandatory target-led Bio-diversity Action Plans (BAP); planning guidance to give greater protection to SSSIs, AONBs, wetland areas, flood plains and green belts; local authority BAPs and protected sites; and, CAP payments for native woodland regeneration to 25% land cover (2 points). UK companies [p. 4] would be “banned from operating lower environmental or labour standards abroad than are required in Britain” (1 point).

GREEN SCORE = 3½/4

7. Corporations and business

FOE’s Manifesto Priorities for Companies

a) commit to new company legislation to ensure mandatory environmental and social reporting for large companies (1 point)

b) ensure that company directors are legally liable for harm to the natural environment and/or human health caused by their company’s products and processes (including GM crops and other products) (1 point)

TOTAL = 2 points

LABOUR: Labour will [p. 11] modernise company law to “promote transparency” generally, and will [p. 40] “promote socially responsible business practice” through advisory services, the ethical trading initiative and the Export Credit Guarantee Department’s “new code of business principles” (½ point).

LABOUR SCORE = ½/2

CONSERVATIVE: There appear to be no relevant provisions in the manifesto.

CONSERVATIVE SCORE = 0/2

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT: The largest companies will be required to report on social and environmental performance [p. 12], and an “Environmental Responsibility Act will set out reporting requirements and environmental standards for government and businesses” [p. 14] (1 point). The manifesto pledges [p. 7] new laws on corporate environmental liability, which will also cover GM crops and food (1 point).

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT SCORE = 2/2

GREEN: “Large companies should publish annual reports on the social and environmental impacts of their activities, including an inventory of their resource use and emissions” [p. 4] to the same rigour as financial accounts (1 point). “Strict laws” will make biotech companies “liable for any harm their products cause” [p. 8], and “new laws” [p. 11] will “make producers liable for environmental damage” (1 point).

GREEN SCORE = 2/2

8. Tax and public expenditure

FOE's Manifesto Priorities for Environmental Taxes

- a) commit to polluter pays taxation, targeting unsustainable natural resource use, toxic chemicals and polluting technologies/fuels (1 point)
- b) commit to green tax credits and differential tax rates to favour environmentally sound technologies, and clean products, processes and fuels (1 point)
- c) commit to a carbon tax (1 point)
- d) commit to recycled pollution tax revenues to fund such credits and similar incentives, including to reduce employers' National Insurance Contributions (1 point)

FOE's Manifesto Priorities for Green Spending

- a) for rural buses, and on rail services and infrastructure (1 point)
- b) for national waste minimisation, recycling and reuse programmes (1 point)
- c) for nationwide energy conservation and renewables programmes (1 point)
- d) for green farming and organic conversion, with a minimum 25% of all support for agriculture spent on these methods by 2005 (1 point)

TOTAL = 8 points

LABOUR: Tax policy will be governed by five factors, including [p. 10] “the needs ... of the environment”, and [p. 41], to help use natural resources more efficiently and recycle more, Labour will “continue to tax pollution and reward clean production”, and a Carbon Trust [p. 13] will recycle £100 million to accelerate the take-up of low-carbon technologies (2 points). Local authorities will respond congestion charges on “better” transport services, and tax measures, including VED differentials, will support more efficient and cleaner vehicles and cleaner fuels, and an R&D tax credit to promote business investment in research including for “growing, global market for green” and “low carbon” technologies (1 point).

Labour's green spending plans include £60 billion for rail and rolling stock, including 25 new light rail/tram schemes, and a pledge to renew the national bus fleet by 2006 (1 point). They will “work with” local authorities to introduce kerb-side recycling; £700 million for renewable energies and a doubling of expenditure on energy efficiency (1 point); and, an expansion of the £3 billion 7 year Rural Development Programme so farming responds to consumers and produces to “sustain and improve the environment”, including organic conversion fund increases (½ point).

LABOUR SCORE = 5½/8

CONSERVATIVE: The manifesto pledges to abolish Labour's Climate Change Levy [p. 16], without specifying how alternatives would be implemented, alongside a 6p tax cut off petrol and diesel. The manifesto claims [p. 39] that “it is technology, not taxation, that cuts pollution from vehicles”, yet they will “cut taxes on cleaner fuels and vehicles” and introduce “tax incentives to tackle climate change” (½ point).

The Conservatives [p. 39] will “set out long-term investment plans for roads and public transport”; and, CAP spending [p. 37] will be reformed to, amongst other things, “protect the

environment”, without detailing how (½ point)

CONSERVATIVE SCORE = 1/8

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT: The manifesto [p. 20] states it is “essential to make a major shift in taxation from ‘goods’ like wealth creation, which benefit Britain, to ‘bads’ which are harmful, like pollution”; taxes will [p. 8-9] be levied on polluting vehicles and fuels, congestion and non-residential parking, and the landfill tax [p. 17] will increase (1 point). A full Green Budget assessment of every budget will help support green technology and new environmental industries [p. 20], such as cleaner vehicles and fuels [p. 8-9], energy conservation [p. 10], and revenues [p. 17] from a special greenfield tax will be used to clean-up brown-field and damaged wildlife sites (1 point). The Liberal Democrats will [p. 13] gradually replace the Climate Change Levy with a “carbon tax” on all energy use (1 point). A Green Tax Commission [p. 20] will advise on guaranteeing that increases in environmental taxes will be matched by tax cuts elsewhere; green taxation will involve taxing differently, not taxing more (½ point).

Green spending will be increased [p. 8-9] on rural buses, rail and other public transport through bond issues and tax revenues (1 point); a national [p. 17] doorstep recycling collection (1 point); domestic [p. 10] energy conservation and renewables (1 point); and, [p. 16] for green and organic farming, and to support small and family farms, by refocusing payments (½ point).

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT SCORE = 7/8

GREEN: Eco-taxes [p. 11] “must be levied on non-renewable and polluting resources, in particular aggregates, pesticides, organochlorines, plastics and fossil fuels”(1 point). A new Land Value Tax [p. 3] would replace council taxes, and be levied according to social and environmental desirability; vehicle excise duty would be absorbed into fuel duty to reflect the full mileage costs of driving; landfill tax revenues [p. 10-11] will be diverted to expand recycling (1 point). Energy taxes [p. 10] will reflect “the environmental impact of the generation method”, and eco-taxes on fossil fuels [p. 3] will be “directly proportional to their carbon content”(1 point). In addition to green tax revenues recycled to fund environmentally sound investment in Britain, the so-called ‘Tobin Tax’ on currency speculation would be introduced, and paid into an international fund to promote sustainable development (1 point). The government [p. 3] “should invest in sustainable industries” like recycling, energy conservation and public transport. The £60 billion [p. 7] earmarked for rail will be spent on increasing capacity, safety and reliability, and the £59 billion earmarked for roads will be redirected to support pedestrians and cyclists, and rural public transport (1 point). Spending will increase [p. 11] on recycling and on digestion plants to produce bio-gas from sewage, agricultural, organic and non-recycled waste (1 point). “More resources” should be provided by government to meet energy conservation targets, and incentives [p. 10] should be provided for renewables, like wind, solar and bio-mass power (1 point). CAP spending [p. 8-9] will support organic conversion, farm incomes and not production, agri-environment schemes must receive £500 million by 2005, and at least 20% of Structural and Cohesion Fund budgets support sustainable rural development (1 point).

GREEN SCORE = 8/8

9. Greening Government

FOE's Manifesto Priorities for Green Government Reform

- a) abolish MAFF, and set up a new Department to promote sustainable farming, rural economic diversity and countryside protection (1 point)
- b) reform the DETR, with much stronger environmental regulation, protection and resource management responsibilities (1 point)
- c) reform the DTI as a Department for Sustainable Industry, able to catalyse a “green industrial revolution” by integrating environmental protection and social justice priorities with trade and industrial goals (1 point)
- d) commit to green government as a whole (1 point)

TOTAL = 4 points

LABOUR: Labour will replace MAFF [p. 15] with a new Department of Rural Affairs (DERA) to “lead renewal in rural areas”, and be responsible for [p. 14] a “radical reorientation of CAP away from distorting European-wide production subsidies towards more national responsibility for domestic farming, environmental and rural development priorities”. The DERA will work with an independent commission to advise on creating a sustainable farm and food sector, which advances environmental, health and animal welfare goals (1 point). Labour have recently committed the DTI to a new sustainable development strategy, which, though not mentioned in the manifesto, will run through the next Parliament at least (½ point). However, they have dropped the 1997 manifesto pledge to “put environmental concern at the heart of all government decision-making”.

LABOUR SCORE = 1½/4

CONSERVATIVE: The Conservatives will set up [p. 38] a new Select Committee on Rural Affairs “to monitor the impact on rural communities of all aspects of government policy”; and a Road Standards Unit [p. 39] to “champion the interests of road users and minimise the environmental effects of roads”.

CONSERVATIVE SCORE = 0/4

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT: The Liberal Democrats will [p. 16] “abolish MAFF”, and set up an Agricultural Ombudsman to protect farming, under a new Department of Rural Affairs to promote interests of the countryside as a whole, with clear sustainability, environmental, social (eg supporting small and family farms) and diversification goals (1 point). The manifesto commits [p. 14] to strengthening DETR by giving it control over energy and water (from DTI), strengthening the Environment Agency [p. 7], and giving new conservation management responsibilities [p. 17] (1 point). It promises [p. 14] that a new “Environment and Responsibility Act will set out reporting requirements and environmental standards for government and business, and introduce environmental audits across all government departments and local authorities”, alongside a Green Budget and Green Tax Commission [p. 20], a Sustainable Transport Authority [p. 8] and greater environmental powers and resources for HM Customs (1 point).

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT SCORE = 3/4

GREEN: A new Ministry of Food [p. 8] will replace MAFF, “to protect food safety by representing consumers’ interests separately from producers’”, and promote their sustainable agriculture and environmental/countryside protection policies (1 point). The DETR would gain greater environmental protection powers through planning law used to enforce new green energy building regulations [p. 10], green transport plans [p. 7], pollution control laws and nature conservation powers [p. 11] (1 point). Similarly, the DTI would be responsible for tackling the adverse impacts of globalisation by promoting diverse local economic production [p. 3], sustainable industries, and high environmental protection standards in business [p. 4] (1 point). The manifesto assumes major institutional reform, rather than detailing specific greening government changes (½ point).

GREEN SCORE = 3½/4

10. The global agenda and sustainable development, trade and the WTO

FOE’s Manifesto Priorities for Greening Global Government and Trade

- a) global regulation of corporations to make them accountable to civil society and government, wherever they operate (1 point)
- b) effective enforcement of multi-lateral environment agreements, with no subservience to trade rules and institutions (1 point)
- c) fundamental reform of the WTO, with no new round of negotiations until best practice environmental and social safeguards are built into WTO procedures, and agricultural trade removed from its remit (1 point)
- d) meet the UN 0.7% of GNP aid target, and full debt cancellation for the world’s poorest countries (1 point)

TOTAL = 4 points

LABOUR: Labour will “promote” socially responsible business practice through voluntary measures. The manifesto commits [p. 41] to “provide leadership abroad, working for international agreement on climate change”, for a “strong environmental protection agency built around the current UN environment programme” and to improve marine and forest conservation overseas (½ point). Labour will also work for “improved integration of the environment in European policies”. The manifesto [p. 39] merely supports “respect for the environment” as world trade expands, while calling for the WTO to be reformed, with a reduction in developed world agricultural protectionism. The overseas aid budget will [p. 40] rise to 0.33% of GNP by 2003/4, and “remain committed to the UN target of 0.7%” with further “substantial increases over the next Parliament”; Labour will continue to help heavily indebted poor countries qualify for 100% debt relief where this benefits the poor, and work to prevent debt burdens by refusing export credits for excessive military spending (½ point). Poverty reduction “depends on safeguarding natural resources on which poor people depend” [p. 41].

LABOUR SCORE = 1/4

CONSERVATIVE: Apart from a vague commitment [p. 30] to “work towards the UN aid target of 0.7% of GNP”, and the recognition [p. 39] that the “biggest global environmental challenge is to prevent climate change” and acceptance of previous government commitments

in this area, there appears nothing of relevance in this manifesto. A new Foreign, Commonwealth and Trade Office will bring diplomacy and free trade together [p. 31].

CONSERVATIVE SCORE = 0/4

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT: New laws [p. 7] to ensure corporate liability for environmental damage will be introduced; and, support for a new global compact to reduce environmentally damaging subsidies in fossil fuels, agriculture, forestry and fisheries (½ point). The manifesto supports much stronger integration of environmental priorities throughout EU policies, which is “particularly important” for EU overseas aid and trade; the European Court of Justice will help ensure all Member States comply fully with environmental standards; the EU should help raise environmental standards world-wide, and improve enforcement of environmental conventions, such as over endangered species, climate change and GM products; stronger environmental objectives will be introduced into the CAP, IMF policies, World and regional development Banks (1 point). WTO rules [p. 19] should respect environmental principles, as long as they are applied in a non-protectionist way; environmental objectives and principles will be fully integrated into its activities (1 point). The 0.7% UN target will be honoured, existing debt reduction moves supported and more rapid action on debt relief through the World Bank and IMF (½ point).

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT SCORE = 3/4

GREEN: Large corporations should [p. 4] publish environmental reports as authoritative as financial accounts; ‘site here to sell here’ policies should ensure multinational companies invest and produce locally; and UK companies banned from operating to lower environmental or labour standards abroad than in the UK (1 point). The EU [p. 16] should address transnational ecological issues, while trade is left to Member States; and trade in food removed from WTO rules (½ point). The WTO [p. 4] should be fundamentally reformed, by being replaced with a new UN body dedicated to the promotion of sustainable trade, economic justice and localisation; in the interim, WTO agreements must not undermine the environment, sustainable development or human and animal welfare; there should be no new trade round or expansion of remit (1 point). The UK [p. 13] “must write off the bi-lateral debts of the 40 poorest nations, and encourage banks and other countries to do likewise”; debt repayments should be used to fund conservation schemes; and the aid budget increased to 0.7% of GDP within five years, and 1% of GDP within a decade (1 point).

GREEN SCORE = 3½/4

GRAND TOTAL = 50 points

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