

## PART 6: Comparing the manifestos – diversity of democratic options

The following tables compare the proposals of different parties according to a number of different themes, to give an idea of the scope of democratic options on offer.

### 1. Proposals for Parliament

Plans for	Labour	Conservative	Lib Dem	Other
<i>House of Lords</i>	Remove hereditaries; free Parly vote on composition; 'codify' key conventions; time limit on scrutiny of bills	Seek consensus on 'substantially elected' House.	Replace current 'botched' House with a 'predominantly elected second chamber.'	<i>Green Party:</i> Fully elected body chosen by PR <i>UKIP:</i> Keep Lords unelected.
<i>Elections to Parliament</i>	Basically no change; still reviewing experience of PR for other elections; no change without a referendum	No mention.	Introduce STV for elections to Commons; no proposal for elections to Lords	<i>Respect:</i> PR.
<i>Voting at 16</i>	No mention.	No mention.	Yes.	<i>Plaid C; Respect:</i> Yes
<i>Parliamentary reforms</i>	Continue to support proposals by Modernisation Cttee that improve scrutiny and accountability.	Strengthen select committees; English MPs only to vote on English matters; reduce MPs by 20%.	'Strengthen the powers of Parliament to scrutinise Government, enhancing the Select Committee system'; set up select committee to monitor UK arms sales.	<i>Plaid C:</i> Parliamentary milk ombudsman.

### 2. Constitution and machinery of government

Plans for	Labour	Conservative	Lib Dem	Other
<i>Royal Prerogative</i>	Not a word on what was an area of reform when in opposition	No mention.	Put on statutory basis, with War Powers and Civil Service acts.	<i>Respect:</i> Despite anti-war stance, no mention.
<i>Civil Service and structure of government</i>	Reductions in size of Civil Service, in accordance with efficiency proposals set out in Gershon Review. No mention of Civil Service Act, despite recent publication of draft bill.	Reductions in size of Civil Service as set out in James Review, outstripping Gershon. Appoint 'Homeland Security Minister.'	Civil Service Act to protect political impartiality; reduce government departments, scrapping Department of Trade and Industry, and cut ministers by a third; dedicated asylum processing agency.	<i>Plaid C:</i> 'A separate civil and public service for Wales.' <i>SDLP:</i> 'Single new Department to deal with both policing and justice issues.'
<i>Freedom of Information</i>	No mention.	If Conservatives 'take the country to war, we will tell the British people why.' No reference to	No mention.	<i>SDLP:</i> Introduce 'Truth Body' for victims of terrorism.

		statutory framework to ensure this.		
<i>Written Constitution</i>	Not specifically referred to, but greater formalisation, for instance of House of Lords practices.	No mention.	Not referred to, but reform of Royal Prerogative would mean greater formalisation.	<i>Plaid C</i> Bill of Rights <i>SNP</i> Written constitution. <i>Green:</i> Written constitution.

### 3. Plans for equality and human rights

<b>Plans for</b>	<b>Labour</b>	<b>Conservative</b>	<b>Lib Dem</b>	<b>Other</b>
<i>Equal Citizenship</i>	Introduce Single Equality Act and set up new Commission on Equality and Human Rights	Opposed to 'political correctness' imposed on police and educators; will 'review' Human Rights Act.	A Single Equality Act.	<i>BNP:</i> End positive discrimination <i>Plaid C:</i> Bill of Rights <i>SNP:</i> Written constitution. <i>SDLP:</i> 'Single Equality Bill'; Establish 'Equality Tribunal.'
<i>Asylum policy</i>	Continue to cut asylum numbers and remove failed applicants faster	Parliament to set annual fixed quota.	Create a dedicated agency for quicker better decisions.	<i>Veritas:</i> 'We will only take our fair share of refugees.'
<i>Immigration policy</i>	Introduce points system for migrants; English tests for those who stay; end 'chain migration'; no more appeals for non-family migrants	Parliament to set fixed annual quota. Points system. Health checks for immigrants.	Work out an appropriate number of work permits in conjunction with business and public sector.	<i>BNP:</i> End to immigration. Voluntary repatriation. <i>UKIP:</i> Opposed to 'over-crowding'. Repatriate policy from EU.

<i>Cultural Identity</i>	English language tests for all immigrants who want to stay in Britain permanently.	‘There should be popular consent for further demographic change.’		<p><i>Veritas:</i> Diverse society, but ‘one culture.’</p> <p><i>Plaid C:</i> Promote the Welsh language, including pressing for its recognition by the EU.</p> <p><i>DUP:</i> Government should promote Ulster-Scottish culture.</p> <p><i>UUP:</i> Abolish Parades Commission, protect ‘right to parade.’</p>
<i>Media Freedom</i>	BBC governors to be replaced by ‘BBC Trust’ to ensure accountability to licence-fee payers; Channel 4 to remain publicly owned; ITV and Channel 5 retained in public service system; modernise copyright so ‘appropriate for the digital age.’	No mention.	Independent regulation and governance for BBC.	<p><i>BNP:</i> Legislate to prevent media disseminating ‘falsehoods.’;</p> <p><i>Plaid C:</i> Regrets decline in English [sic] language television production in Wales.</p>

#### 4. Democracy below Westminster

<b>Plans for</b>	<b>Labour</b>	<b>Conservative</b>	<b>Lib Dem</b>	<b>Other</b>
<i>Political parties</i>	Explore ways to support the ‘vital’ democratic role of parties, but not their ‘campaigning activities.’	No mention.	No mention.	<p><i>UUP; DUP</i> Parties not renouncing violence to be excluded from NI Executive.</p> <p><i>BNP:</i> End all state, corporate, trades union, pressure group funding for political parties.</p>
<i>Non-Parliamentary elections</i>	‘Committed to reviewing the experience of the new electoral systems...for the devolved administrations, the European Parliament and the London Assembly.’	No mention.	STV for local, Welsh, Scottish elections. Review closed list European electoral system.	<p><i>Plaid C:</i> ‘Fairer voting’ for Welsh Assembly; PR for local councils.</p> <p><i>Respect:</i> ‘Proportional Representation...in all elections.’</p> <p><i>Green:</i> PR in local elections.</p>

<i>Devolution</i>	Enhanced legislative powers and reformed structure for the Welsh Assembly. Review the powers of the London Mayor and the Greater London Authority. Further devolution to regional bodies.	Abolish regional assemblies. Welsh referendum on future of Assembly.	Enhanced powers for Welsh, Scottish and Northern Ireland devolved bodies.	<i>Plaid C:</i> If no Welsh independence, 'primary law-making powers on devolved issues' for the Assembly. <i>DUP;UUP:</i> No Sinn Fein in NI Executive.
<i>Local government</i>	More 'freedoms' for local councils, subject to national standards; even more freedom for successful councils; new push towards mayors	Abolish regional assemblies. Planning, housing, transport, fire services returned to local authorities.	Less central controls on councils; 'cut the burden of inspections'; shift powers of quangos to cities and counties	<i>DUP:</i> Union Flag should be flown over local govt buildings. <i>SDLP:</i> No obligation to fly union flag.
<i>Communities</i>	Community ownership of assets such as village halls; service delivery by Community Interest Companies.	Local communities to have 'greater say over planning decisions.'	Regional functions placed in single agency comprising elected councillors.	<i>SNP:</i> Greater budgets and responsibility for Community Councils.
<i>New democratic forms</i>	Explore 'new and innovative forms of public engagement' (cf, NICE).	Elected police commissioners. Communities to influence police priorities.	Elected local social services authorities.	<i>SNP:</i> 'Citizen Debates' and 'People's Business' in the independent Scottish Parliament. <i>Green:</i> Local referendums. <i>UKIP:</i> Local/national referendums.
<i>Council tax</i>	Reform Council tax after review; go ahead with revaluation.	Various remissions in council tax; no mention of subsequent promise to cancel revaluation.	Replace with local income tax.	<i>SNP;Plaid C:</i> Local Income Tax.

## 5. Rule of Law

<b>Plans for</b>	<b>Labour</b>	<b>Conservative</b>	<b>Lib Dem</b>	<b>Other</b>
<i>Anti-terrorist measures</i>	'New laws to help catch and convict those involved in helping to plan terrorist activity or who glorify or condone acts of	'Robust anti-terror laws'; appoint 'Homeland Security Minister.'	Admit intelligence evidence presently banned from trials of terrorists; repeal Prevention of Terrorism Act which introduced control	<i>Respect:</i> Repeal all anti-terrorist legislation. <i>UUP:</i> Special criminal courts for suspects; more security surveillance

	terror.’		orders	<i>SDLP:</i> Opposed to control orders.
<i>Combating Anti-Social Behaviour</i>	More power for police and local authority officials; anonymous evidence from victims.	More school discipline.	Crackdown on irresponsible licenses; ‘Acceptable Behaviour Contracts’; attack on causes of ASB.	<i>Respect:</i> Scrap Anti-Social Behaviour Orders.
<i>Criminal Justice System</i>	Electronic tagging for released prisoners; pilot lie-detector tests for sex offenders.	More police; expansion in prison population; longer sentences for ‘career criminals’; less ‘political correctness’ for police.	More police; more non-custodial community sentences; reduce bureaucracy for police.	<i>SNP:</i> Fines reflect ability to pay; non-custodial sentences for fine defaulters; alternatives to prison. <i>SDLP:</i> Police, not MI5, responsible for law and order
<i>Introduce ID Cards?</i>	Yes.	No mention.	No.	<i>UUP:</i> Yes. <i>SNP; Plaid C; Green; UKIP</i> No.
<i>Hate Crimes</i>	‘Give people of all faiths the same protection against incitement to hatred.’	No mention.	‘Hate-crime investigation units’ in each police force.	<i>BNP:</i> Repeal all laws restricting free speech, starting with those covering race and religion. <i>UUP:</i> ‘A Northern Ireland anti-racism strategy.’ <i>SDLP:</i> Outlaw ‘sectarian chanting at football matches’ and prevent ‘bands that promote hate language or use paramilitary symbols from parading.’

## 6. International democracy

<b>Plans for</b>	<b>Labour</b>	<b>Conservative</b>	<b>Lib Dem</b>	<b>Other</b>
<i>Europe</i>	Argue for ‘yes’ vote on Constitutional Treaty in a referendum; seek ‘yes’ vote for Euro when five conditions met.	Opposed to Constitutional Treaty and Euro entry; will restore opt-out from Social Chapter; ‘bring back powers from Brussels’; restore control over fishing.	Supports Constitutional Treaty and working to create conditions for Euro-entry, both subject to referendum.	<i>Veritas; UKIP; BNP:</i> Withdrawal from EU. <i>SDLP:</i> Pro-EU Constitution. <i>Respect:</i> Anti-Constitution <i>SNP; Plaid C:</i> National independence within EU.
<i>International Co-operation and organisations</i>	As chair of G8, press for reform of international trade; more action on climate change; more transparency for IMF	Withdraw from 1951 Geneva Convention on Refugees.	Reform of UN and EU to be ‘more responsive to international challenges’; reform international trade rules. Emphasis on	<i>Respect:</i> Oppose globalisation <i>DUP; UUP:</i> Support war on terror. <i>SDLP:</i> Global framework for labour

	and World Bank.		Kyoto.	mobility and environmental problems. <i>Green:</i> End veto powers and permanent members for UN Security Council. <i>Plaid C:</i> No military action without UN approval.
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<i>Aid</i>	Meet UN target for UK of 0.7% GDP by 2013. Double global aid. Stop aid being tied to privatisation and unwanted trade liberalisation	Meet UN target by 2013.	Meet UN target by 2011.	<i>SNP:</i> Independent Scotland 'will contribute to the UN target of 0.7%.'
<i>Trade</i>	Press for changes to global trade terms to allow poor countries to build their ability to compete; for 'special treatment' in the Doha development round trade talks; for ending export subsidies to rich farmers by 2010 and reform of EU's CAP	Equip poor countries through advocacy fund to press their case in world trade negotiations. Press EU to reduce farm subsidies and end export subsidies.	Break down tariffs and quotas that prevent poorest nations' exports to richest nations. Reduce agricultural subsidies and reform CAP.	<i>Green:</i> Reform or replace the WTO with General Agreement on Sustainable Trade that focuses on local over global.
<i>Debt</i>	Has cancelled debts of poorest countries and pushing others to offer 100% relief on debts to IMF and other global organisations. Pledge of extra funds for debt relief, not from existing aid budgets.	Want 100% relief on debts and to ensure that the international credit of receiving countries is not compromised.	Want 100% relief on debts and against imposing privatisation or trade liberalisation as conditions for debt relief. Bankruptcy procedure for nations that cannot repay debt.	<i>Green:</i> Push for high priority to cancelling the debts of the 52 poorest indebted nations. <i>Respect:</i> 'Cancel the third world debt' without conditions.
<i>Corruption</i>	Pledges to ratify the UN Convention on Corruption and to work for faster repatriation of looted funds lodged with UK banks. Will press UK-based oil and mining companies to issue more open accounts.	Will encourage UK-based companies to publish accounts of their international activities. Focus on African nations to act transparently in the interests of their people.	Reform UK laws to meet obligations under the UN Convention. Enforce OECD Convention on Bribery. Seek EU agreement on transparency for EU-based companies.	
<i>Arms Trade</i>	Pledge to work actively to secure an International Arms Trade Treaty which sets common standards regulating arms trade.	No mention.	International Arms Trade Treaty and making EU voluntary code legally binding; set up select committee to monitor UK arms sales.	<i>Green:</i> Also for International Arms Trade Treaty. End subsidies and credits for arms sales, close DESO and ECGD. <i>SNP:</i> Tighter controls on arms exports.
<i>Human Rights</i>	Support UN Security Council focus on conflict prevention; formation of UN Peace-building	Review Human Rights Act, an enactment of European Convention on	Work with international organisations and US 'to promote international law,	<i>SDLP:</i> 'Advocate withdrawal of support for regimes that flout human rights'; 'an All-Ireland Charter of Rights.'

	Commission; 'radical reform of the UN humanitarian system.'	Human Rights; withdraw from 1951 Geneva Convention on Refugees; 'work for modernised international agreements on migration.'	democracy and respect for human rights.' Support 'reform of the UN and the EU to make them more responsive to international challenges.'	<i>UKIP:</i> Outside EU, UK not bound by European Charter of Fundamental Rights.
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