



Green Foundations

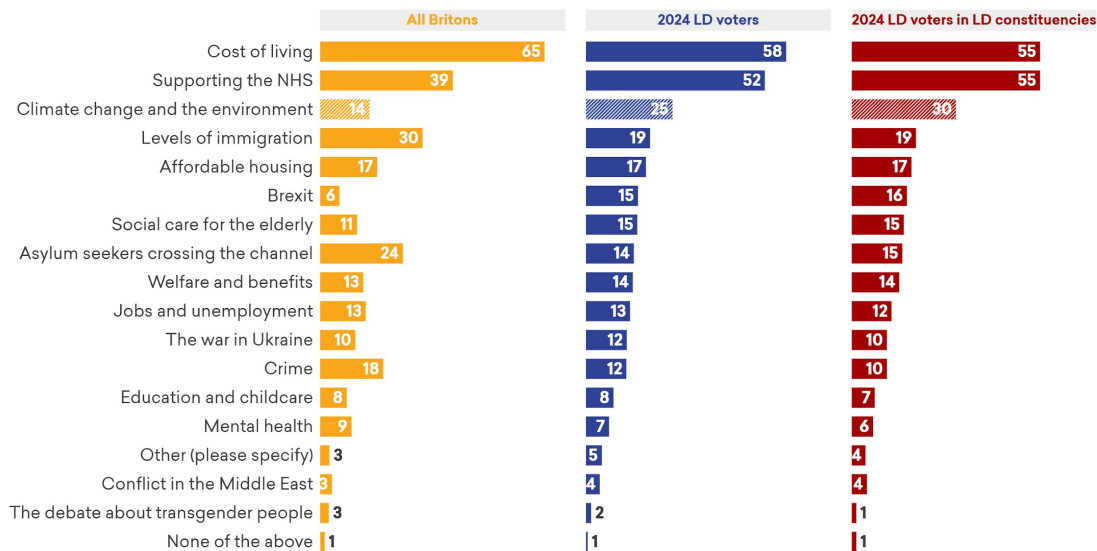
Where next for the Liberal Democrats
on climate and nature?

The political opportunity for the Liberal Democrats on the environment

The environment is a real priority for Lib Dem voters

Lib Dem voters are more likely to prioritise the environment than other Britons

In your opinion, which are the most IMPORTANT issues facing the country today? Please select up to three.



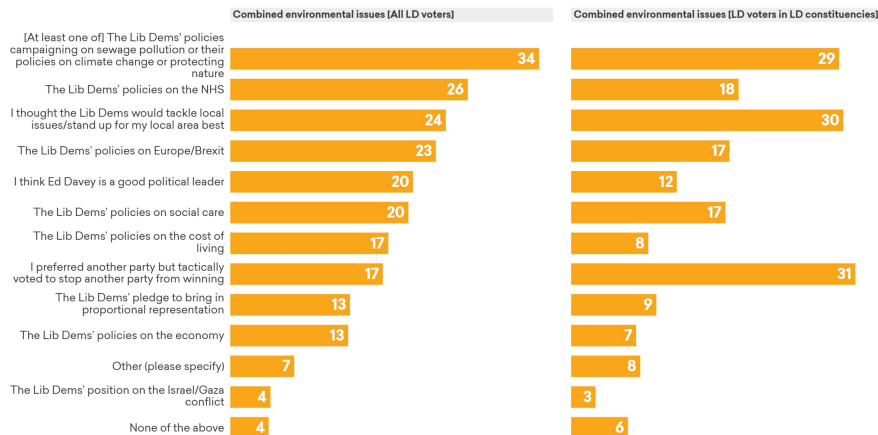
Liberal Democrat voters are twice as likely as the general public to think that climate change and the environment represent one of the top issues facing the country.

This is the case for **both** Lib Dem voters in the constituencies held by the party and those voting Lib Dem in constituencies not won by the party.

Environmental factors played an important role in driving the vote choice of Lib Dem supporters

Environmental issues were a key motivation for voting Lib Dem

Thinking about why you voted for the Liberal Democrats at the last General Election, which, if any, of the below were the top reasons for voting for the party? [Select up to three.]



Environmental issues played a key role in driving votes for the Liberal Democrats at the last election.

One third of Lib Dem voters say that at least one of the party's policies on: sewage pollution, climate change or protecting nature, were a top reason for voting for the party.

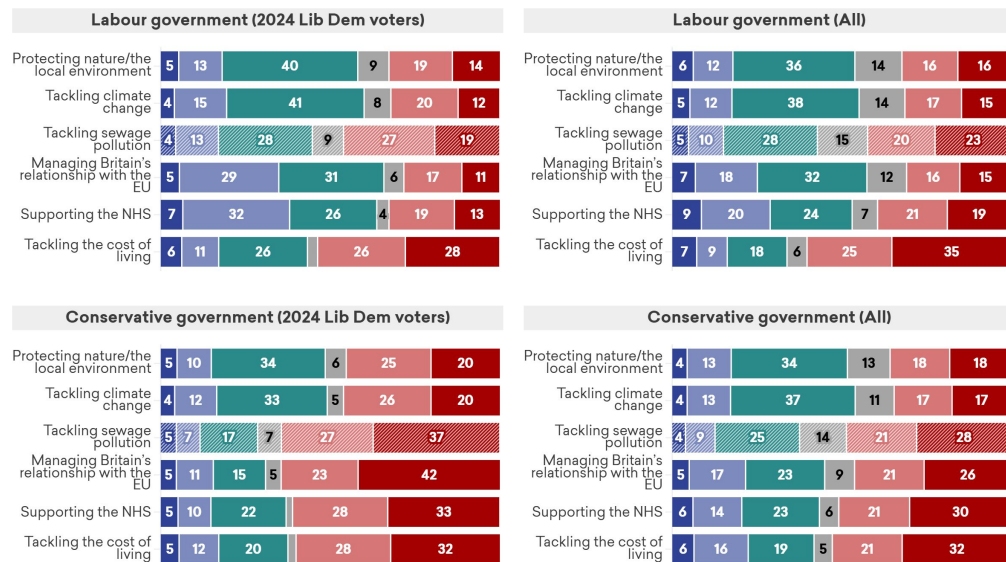
This is the case for Lib Dem voters both in Lib Dem constituencies and elsewhere in non Lib Dem seats.

The poor perception of the Labour Party and Conservatives on the environment provides an opening for the Liberal Democrats

Lib Dem voters, and Britons, are particularly negative about both the Conservative and Labour Government's records on tackling sewage pollution

To what extent do you think the current Labour [previous Conservative government] is doing [did] a good or bad job at the following?

● Very good ● Somewhat good ● Neither good nor bad ● Not sure ● Somewhat bad ● Very bad



Views of the current and previous governments' environmental record are lukewarm. For Britons as a whole, as well as Lib Dem voters, only Labour's record on the cost of living is seen as worse than their performance on tackling sewage pollution.

Among Lib Dem voters – sewage pollution is the issue they see the last Conservative government as performing worst on.



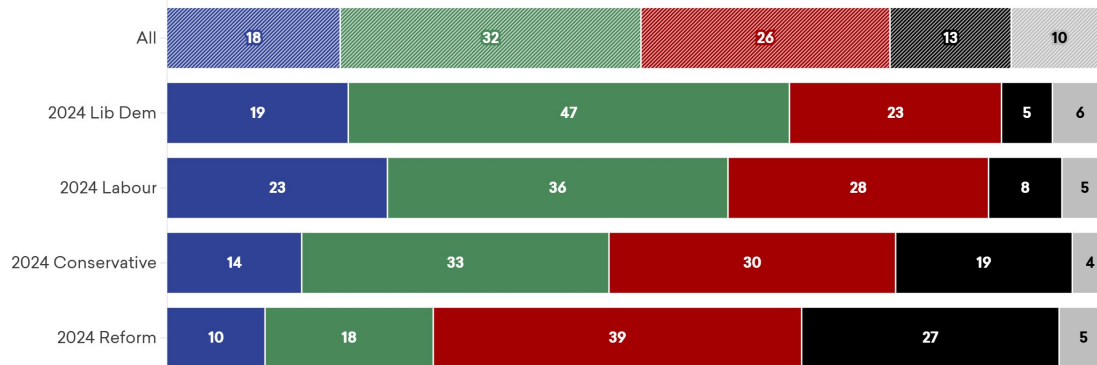
The tradeoffs the Lib Dems
must navigate

Liberal Democrat voters are particularly likely to reject a competition between prioritising climate and nature

Lib Dem voters are most likely to think climate and local nature should be equal priorities

What do you think the UK government should prioritise when it comes to protecting the environment?

- The government should prioritise tackling global warming/climate change e.g. reducing carbon emissions
- The government should prioritise tackling global warming and protecting local natural environments equally
- The government should prioritise protecting our local natural environments e.g. protecting local wildlife
- Not applicable - I don't think either tackling global warming or protecting local natural environments should be a government priority
- Don't know



Liberal Democrat voters are the most likely to say that nature and climate should be prioritised equally.

In focus group conversations, Lib Dem voters rejected the two as being in competition with each other, instead arguing they were interrelated.

"I think the local and global environment do relate. The seas are changing. We get more jellyfish than we used to and things like that because there's not many fish anymore and the temperature of the sea has changed as well."

Libby, Call Handler, North Cornwall

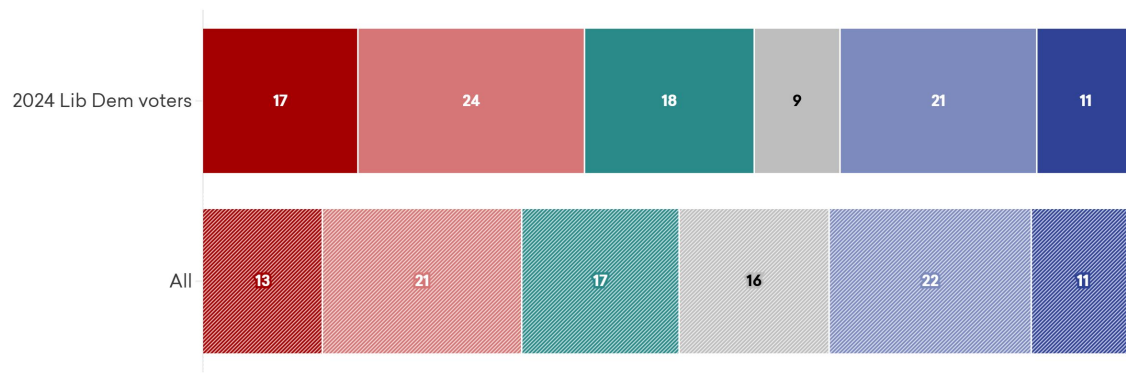
Local environmental versus wider climate ambitions

Lib Dem voters are likely to respond negatively to environmental 'NIMBYISM'

Imagine your local MP promised to support the generation of renewable energy but also opposed a renewable energy infrastructure project, such as a solar farm or pylons, in your constituency on the grounds it might harm local green spaces.

How would this impact your perception of your local MP?

- It would make me feel much more negative towards them
- It would make me feel slightly more negative towards them
- It would make no real difference to how I feel towards them
- Don't know
- It would make me feel slightly more positive towards them
- It would make me feel much more positive towards them



Liberal Democrat voters are unlikely to respond positively to their local MPs' prioritising local environmental concerns over Britain's climate ambitions.

Asked how they would respond to their local MP opposing renewable energy infrastructure on the grounds it might harm local green spaces, 41% of Lib Dem voters say it would make them feel more negatively towards their MP with just 32% saying it would make them feel more positively.

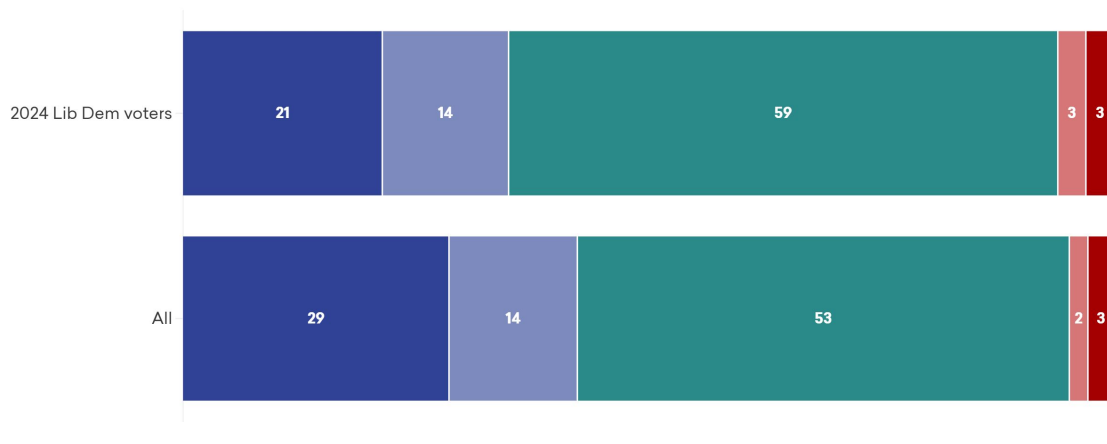
Lib Dem voters are more likely than Britons overall to respond negatively to this environmental NIMBYISM.

Lib Dem voters particularly think their local MP should balance local interests with the national interest

Voters, particularly Lib Dem voters, want their local MPs to balance local interests with the national interest

Thinking about policies that may benefit the UK broadly but negatively impact your local area, use the scale to indicate which best describes what you like from your local MP?

- 1- My local MP should always prioritise what's best for our local area, even if this could be against the national interest ● 2-
● 3- The job of a local MP is to equally balance the interests of their constituency and the UK ● 4-
● 5- My local MP should always prioritise the national interest, even if this could go against what's best for our local area



In contrast to their frequent portrayal as 'NIMBYs', Lib Dem voters are more likely than the general public to think that the job of a local MP is to balance the interests of their local area with the national interest.

Only a third (35%) of Lib Dem voters say a local MP should always prioritise what's best for their local area even if this is not in the wider national interest.

This is lower than the 43% of Britons overall who want to prioritise the local over the national.

Attitudes towards the environmental impact of farmers are more nuanced than many politicians assume

Attitudes towards water companies and bosses are extremely negative – making them an easy public enemy in the sewage pollution debate.

Farmers also make a significant contribution to water pollution, but, as a popular and trusted group, tackling their impact will be politically harder.

Lib Dem voters in North Cornwall, one of the party's most rural seats, offered nuanced views on the environmental impacts of farmers:

- They saw farmers favourably and believed they played an important role in protecting the environment.
- However, some also recognised the pollution involved in farming techniques and wanted strong government action to address this.
- Others argued farmers face real pressures and so, unlike water companies, believed it would be unfair to excessively punish them.

There is scope for the Lib Dems to tackle agricultural pollution – but ensuring their policies support, rather than punish, farmers to be more environmentally friendly will be key.

"I mean a lot of farmers, will plant wildflower fields and do crop rotation and things like which are really good for the soil. I think we need farming, especially here in Cornwall. It's a real backbone of our community".

Claire, Bookkeeper, North Cornwall

"I feel that farmers would probably need the money [they might have to pay in fines] more than South West Water".

Sophie, Finance Assistant, North Cornwall

"I think the farmers should be responsible for what they do. They are running the business and they should be responsible for their waste and keeping the environment safe and clean. And of course that includes rivers as well. I know a lot of farmers have great big slurry pits and they try and do the best they can, but yeah they definitely should be held to account if they do pollute the river, though I think most farmers behave responsibly anyway".

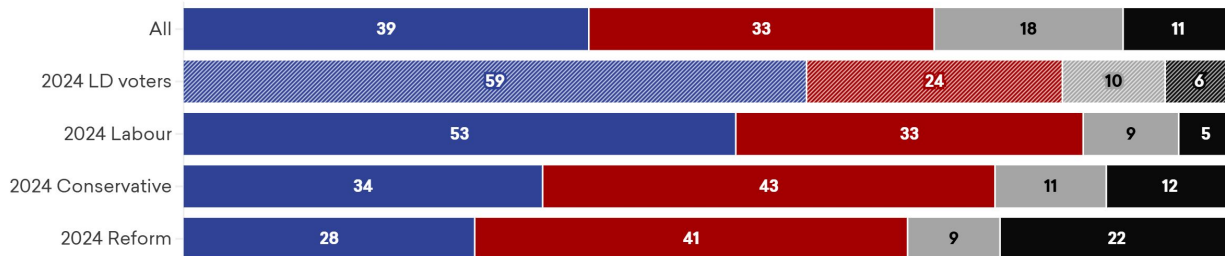
Jeff, GP, North Cornwall

Be cautious about costs: Lib Dem voters are more willing to incur climate costs but this willingness is shallow

Lib Dem voters are more willing to bear costs to protect the environment

Which of the following comes closest to your view?

- The UK government should take strong action to protect the environment, even if it creates some extra costs for the British public
- The UK government should not take strong action to protect the environment if this means creating some extra costs for the British public
- Don't know
- The UK government should not take strong action to protect the environment regardless of whether it creates costs for the British public or not



"I'm not willing to shoulder any of the cost for it. I can't afford it. I think there should be corporate responsibility, it [the climate transition costs] should be born by the people that can afford it... I might be willing to pay a bit more if I could see where it was going. But I myself personally am not willing to pay more when these fat cats [utility bosses] are taking so much money".

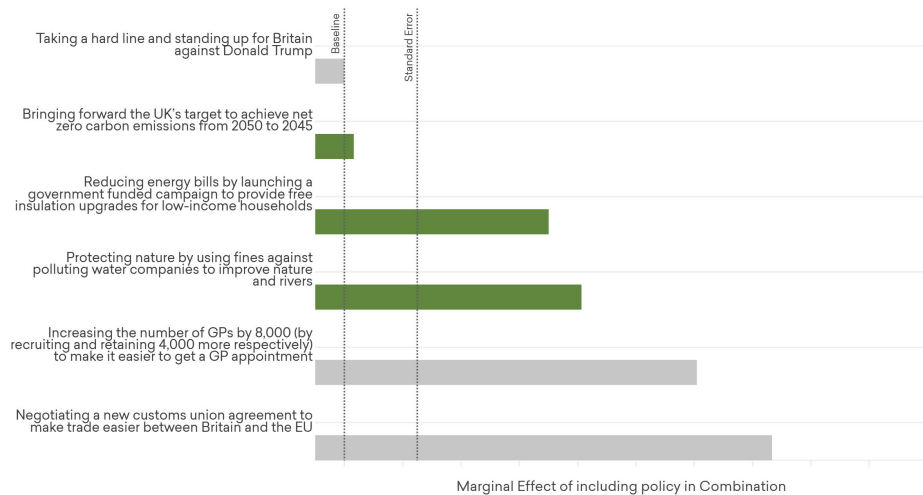
Claire, Bookkeeper, North Cornwall

"I think the cost of living is way too high at the moment, so I wouldn't want to be paying out more money for the climate".

Tamsin, Social Worker, North Cornwall

The electoral rewards could be significant- climate policies are bigger drivers of vote choice than anti-President Trump positioning

Lib Dem 2024 voters

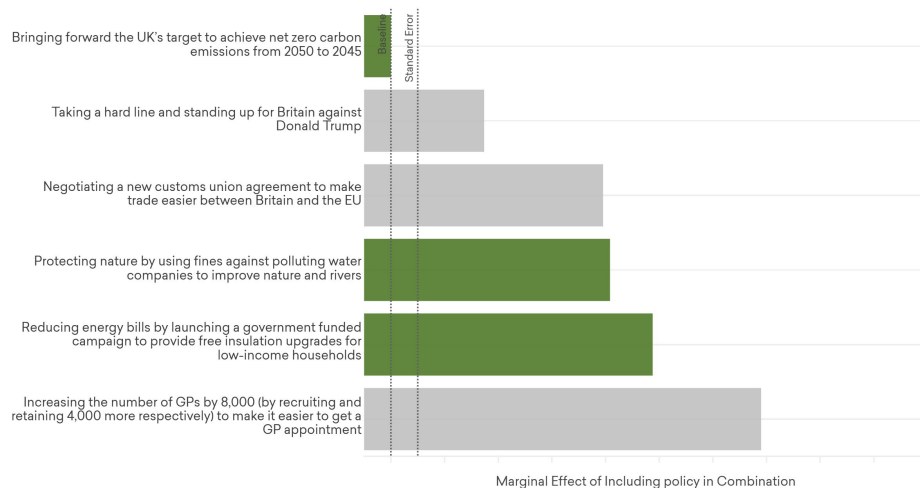


Text shown: Suppose that two parties with the following policy priorities were campaigning in the next general election. Which of these two parties would you be more likely to vote for?

Source: More in Common, April 2025

Which of these two parties would you be more likely to vote for?

General Public



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To hear more about our Green
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