

1. Accountability of the Office for Standards in Education (Ofsted)

1. Conference notes that:

2. Ofsted was created by the Conservative government in 1992 by the Education (Schools) Act ;
3. when it was created, efforts to give schools the power to hold their regulator to account if they
4. believed it to be behaving unfairly were rejected and not incorporated into law;
5. it was widely supposed that this was done because the government believed that the HMIs who
6. came from the previous system of inspection were of a sufficiently high caliber to regulate their own
7. behaviour;

8. in 2004 the Labour government commissioned a general review to consider the scope for reducing.
9. administrative burdens by promoting more efficient approaches to regulatory inspection and
10. enforcement, without compromising regulatory standards or outcomes. ;
11. this review led to the establishment of the 'Hampton Principles' of best practice in achieving the
12. aims of inspection and regulation;
13. these are generally agreed to be; improving practice, protecting against dangerous practice and
14. correctly reporting to government regarding the state of the organisations regulated.

15. the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act (2006) created a legal framework within which
16. regulated organisations could challenge their regulators and force them to improve their practice if
17. they interfered unnecessarily with their activities or behaved unfairly;
18. this was within the context that regulators who adhered to the Regulators' Compliance Code (which
19. is based on the Hampton Principles) would be considered to be acting within the law;

20. in 2009 the Labour Government carried out a Consultation to establish which private and third
21. sector (charitable) organisations should be protected by the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act
22. (2006);
23. this led to all regulators, including Ofsted, being obligated to this law for all their activities with
24. private and third sector organisations from 1st October 2009.

25. Conference further notes that:

26. during this 2009 consultation Ofsted expressed the concern that it could be required to introduce
27. different inspection and regulatory requirements for private/third sector providers operating in the
28. same sector as state providers who are legally required to provide the same levels of service;
29. the government responded by noting that Ofsted could voluntarily apply the required standards
30. to its activities with state funded organisations.
31. however the government did not obligate Ofsted to the law regarding its action with state funded
32. schools;
33. this leaves open the possibility that Ofsted could fail to apply best practice to its activities and that if
34. it did so state funded schools would have no legal mechanism to use to require Ofsted to improve
35. its conduct.

36. Conference is gravely concerned that:

37. there has been a recent significant rise in reports of state funded schools having serious concerns
38. regarding the behavior of Ofsted;
39. in cases where schools have attempted to challenge Ofsted's behavior, which appears to seriously
40. contravene best practice, they have been unable to obtain judicial reviews of Ofsted because they
41. have no legal framework to use.

42. Conference is greatly alarmed that:

- 43 this inconsistency seriously undermines the objective of increasing professional competencies and
44. freedom for those working in education;
45. Ofsted is being used to put pressure on certain schools to opt out of Local Authority control.

46 Conference calls on Liberal Democrat Ministers and Parliamentarians to:

- 47 press for an order to the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act (2006) to be rapidly passed
48. obligating Ofsted to this Act for all its activities, in order to give state funded schools the same
49. protection as private and third sector schools.

2. Filling the Energy Gap

1. **Bearing in mind** humanity's seemingly unstoppable journey to self-destruction, by means of
2. a) an unnecessarily prodigal use of the earth's resources (especially mineral resources) and
3. b) the creation of greenhouse gases by the burning of many of those resources,
4. **Conference recalls** that at our Regional Conference held on 15.10.2011 a motion on Shale Gas
5. was debated and carried. This motion noted the current inadequate regulation of shale gas
6. exploitation, and required this to be resolved to prevent major damage to the mitigation of climate
7. change and to the general environment.
8. **Conference notes** that, since last year's Conference, the risk to future availability of energy supply
9. has been increasing, together with failure to reduce greenhouse gases. This situation is likely to be
10. exacerbated by the recent Ministerial reshuffle, which introduced, into key departments,
11. Conservative Ministers who are hostile to the need for renewable energy.
12. **Conference therefore urges** the continued use of Nuclear Power, on the basis that a small amount
13. of nuclear fuel produces proportionately more energy than any other known energy source, and
14. therefore depletes the earth's total resources less than any other source.
15. **Conference recognises** that alongside this comes the responsibility to ensure the safest possible
16. conditions for those working at, or living near to the Reactors so employed, and a responsibility to
17. initiate or maintain satisfactory schemes for re-processing nuclear fuel or disposing of nuclear
18. waste, as well as ensuring safe decommissioning of redundant nuclear sites.
19. **Furthermore, Conference re-affirms** its commitment to, and continues to encourage the use of
20. a) Windpower with land or sea-based turbines.
21. b) Hydro-electric power.
22. c) Wavepower,
23. d) Solar power,
24. e) Ground sourced heat,
25. and indeed any other form of power generation that does not deplete natural resources or increase
26. greenhouse emissions.
27. Finally, **Conference continues to encourage** the use of environmentally friendly devices and
28. lifestyles.

Amendment 1

After Line 14.

a) Conference also urges that:

b) new nuclear power should be based on Thorium as fuel.

c) Conference notes the advantages of Thorium as follows:

d) the technology is established

e) Thorium reactors do not need mechanical cooling systems to remove excess heat and would shut

f) down without any human intervention eliminating the possibility of [accidents such as Fukushima](#) ;

g) Thorium does not produce Plutonium used for nuclear weapons;

h) in terms of energy available one tonne of Thorium is equivalent to 200 tonnes of Uranium, is 100 per

i) cent useable and doesn't need processing or enriching

j) Thorium is more abundant than Uranium, with enough deposits to power the world for many

k) thousands of years, and it generates much less radioactive waste when burned in reactors.

3: Better Representation without Lords Reform

Conference notes:

1) the statement by Deputy Prime Minister, Nick Clegg, that the Bill to reform the House of Lords toward being an elected chamber will not be proceeding during this session

Conference anticipates:

1) that this means appointments to the House of Lords will continue as before

Conference further notes:

1) our current lack of diversity in North West parliamentarians, for Commons, Lords or Europe

2) that we have 90 Liberal Democrat members of the House of Lords and yet only four of these are North West members

3) that as a party we have a historic lack of diverse representation including of Women; Black & Minority Ethnic (BAME); and Lesbian Gay Bisexual & Transgender (LGBT) people in prominent public office.

Conference welcomes:

1) our party leadership's deliberate decisions over the last 5 years in putting more women and BAME people into the Lords

Conference regrets :

1) the stalling of Lords reform due in large part to Labour putting party interest ahead of principle

Conference calls on:

1) the leader of the Liberal Democrats to use further rounds of Lords appointments to boost our under-represented groups in the House such as LGB&T and the need to give better geographic balance.

APPENDIX

References re OFSTED motion

General information about Ofsted including the date of creation:

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ofsted

The commissioning of a review to “consider the scope for reducing administrative burdens by promoting more efficient approaches to regulatory inspection and enforcement, without compromising regulatory standards or outcomes” www.berr.gov.uk/files/file22988.pdf

The Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act (2006) with a direct link to the salient point

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/51/section/21

The Regulators’ Compliance Code

www.berr.gov.uk/files/file45019.pdf

The 1st October 2009 Order to the Legislative and Regulatory Reform Act is here

www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2009/9780111481080

and the salient point re Ofsted is at (21) (blue numbers).

Government Response to the Consultation on Extending the Coverage of the Regulators’ Compliance Code and the Principles of Good Regulation (May 2009)

www.bis.gov.uk/files/file51591.pdf

The key points are 4.8 and 4.13

Downhills

www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-19271143

www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/107850/response/268894/attach/3/Downhills%20Correspondence.pdf

Furness Academy and Other Cases

www.guardian.co.uk/education/2012/jun/25/ofsted-inspection-upset-headteachers-schools

www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b01k1nk6/File_on_4_School_Inspections/