

LibDems aim for 50% cut by 2030

The Liberal Democrats have formally adopted a radical new energy policy, for the 2015 General Election. Entitled Green Growth, Green Jobs, it makes a number of key commitments pertinent to energy efficiency.

The party aims to “reduce total energy demand by 50 per cent by 2030.” They argue that “using the government’s own pathways model, this is not only completely feasible, it would deliver our objectives far more cheaply than any other alternative that meets all our policy criteria.” Energy efficiency, the policy paper begins “belongs at the heart of a zero-carbon economy.”

On building regulations, they would “step up random testing” of new buildings’ energy performance, “requiring those builders who have cut corners not just to rectify their omissions, but to include extra energy saving measures as a penalty to compensate.”

The Green Deal is a policy with which the Lib Dems in Government are heavily associated. They are promising to “transform the Green Deal into a comprehensive one-off programme to bring all homes up to the EnerPHit standard by 2050. The EnerPHit standard is a reduced version of the Passivhaus standard that recognises the challenges of upgrading older properties but uses Passivhaus components to provide quality assurance and verify energy performance. This would focus initially on two key areas: households in fuel poverty and homes in off-gas areas.”

Several new incentives to promote energy saving would be introduced. These would include differential final stamp duty rates on transactions. “To encourage non-movers to invest in energy efficiency, we would encourage local authorities to reduce tax rates for those who could demonstrate significant improvements in a home’s EPC ratings. We would also permit local authorities to introduce tax surcharges on those householders who failed to take up improvements, especially those that met the Green Deal Golden Rule requirements.”