

# The Liberal Democrats are now the only real party of business

As the former Business Secretary I can't not intervene at this decisive moment in British politics.

In a speech this week I condemned the Tories and Labour for turning their backs on the economy, and explained that the Liberal Democrats are the only real party of business.

You don't have to take my word for it. Today the Lib Dems were endorsed by none other than The Economist. And a letter in the Financial Times from prominent tech figures also backs us.

Both Labour and the Conservatives are adopting a Brexit strategy that seems explicitly designed to inflict maximum economic damage. The storm clouds are already gathering – we are seeing rising inflation, falling real wages and rising personal debt.

Only the Lib Dems have a positive economic plan, including boosting spending while still achieving a surplus on the current budget.

# GENERAL ELECTION 2017 BULLETIN:

> Business Policies Comparison

## POLICY

- > Fight to keep Britain a member of the Single Market
- > Commitment to keeping Britain in the Customs Union
- > Freedom of movement for high skilled workers
- > No increased charges for employing non-EU workers
- > Review to reduce burden of business rates for SMEs
- > Corporation Tax 20% or less
- > Fight to support pan-European IP rights and high level participation in the Digital Single Market
- > Keeping top rate of income tax to under 50%
- > No repeal of the Trade Union Act including compulsory collective bargaining
- > Double the spend on innovation
- > UK-wide high speed broadband
- > Action against tax avoidance
- > Major new programme of capital investment
- > Removing unnecessary regulation to support new markets and investment

### Conservative

### Labour

### Lib Dem



Theresa May keeps insisting that no deal is better than a bad deal, but an extreme Brexit could be disastrous. Theresa May just doesn't seem to care. If we crash out of the Single Market and customs union, respected independent estimates suggest that our trade will slump by almost a third by 2030.

Meanwhile, Labour's plans for a spending spree funded by taxing the rich and corporations have been described by the IFS as wholly unrealistic, and will certainly scare off the investment and talent that are fundamental to our global economy.

The Lib Dems are the only party that genuinely recognises the crucial role of entrepreneurship in generating job creation, innovation and productivity.

As our endorsement by The Economist shows, we are rapidly becoming the only party of business.

Vote Lib Dem on 8th June.

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## [Rising star of Conservatives defects to the Lib Dems](#)

Azi Ahmed, who stood for the Conservative Party at the last election, introduced Vince Cable who gave a speech on the economy and Brexit in London today.

Azi grew up in Oldham and served in the Territorial Army, contesting Rochdale for the Conservatives in the 2015 general election. She was deputy chairman of the London Conservative Women's Organisation. She decided to join the Liberal Democrats recently after meeting party leader Tim Farron.

Liberal Democrat Leader Tim Farron said: "Under Harold Macmillan, Edward Heath and indeed Margaret Thatcher, the Conservative Party saw the vital importance of Britain's relationship with Europe. Margaret Thatcher created the single market – Theresa May wants to leave it, even though she has been told almost a third of our trade could be lost by 2030.

"No wonder sensible, talented Conservatives such as Azi are questioning how they could possibly have a future in a Conservative Party hell bent on an extreme Brexit that will wreck the future for you, your family, your schools and hospitals.

"Theresa May didn't have to go for an extreme Brexit – that was her choice, and decent Conservatives such as Azi can no longer stomach it."

Azi Ahmed said: "I stood as a parliamentary candidate for the Conservatives in the 2015 general election, and was proud to introduce Defence Secretary

Michael Fallon at last year's party conference. but I have left the party to join the Liberal Democrats because I can no longer campaign for a party which has hardened its line on Brexit.

"I believe Theresa May's approach is completely wrong and the Conservatives are making a terrible mistake; our country is going to pay the price.

"I voted Remain and thought there was still a place in the Conservative Party for people like me, but the way they are fighting this election has made me realise I cannot support a policy which goes against the national interest. A hard Brexit is a car crash waiting to happen.

"The Liberal Democrats are the only serious alternative to the Conservatives; their vision for the future of our country is more attractive and inclusive than that of any other party. Tim Farron has articulated a clear, consistent position on Brexit in contrast to the confusion that surrounds Labour's policy.

"One of the greatest challenges we have as a society is making sure younger voters are engaged with politics and don't feel disenfranchised. Brexit was rejected by 75% of 18-24 year-olds in last year's referendum and one of our priorities should be to find a way of involving this generation in the political process. I believe the Liberal Democrats are best placed to do this."

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## [Theresa May has U-turned on Brexit.](#) [How can we trust her?](#)

Can you believe that's the same Theresa May?

The same Theresa May who today said: "A Britain beyond Brexit is more global and outward-looking. A Britain alive with possibilities, more confident in itself, more united and more secure."

What a truly staggering U-turn. What a cheek! How can the British people trust her?

This disingenuous shift in public message is dangerous. It's a calculated attempt to distract attention from the shark-infested waters which we are now entering, and the fact that Theresa May herself has steered us towards them.

The Liberal Democrats are the only party standing up to this disastrous Tory game-playing. Negotiating Brexit will be a task of monumental proportions. It will do great damage to our prosperity, the state of our public services and Britain's place in the world.

We will give you the chance to change Britain's future via a second referendum. You'll have the chance to reject a bad Brexit deal and even remain in the EU.

If you want a strong opposition that is consistent, honest and sensible on Brexit, vote Lib Dem on 8th June.

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## [The Economist backs the Liberal Democrats](#)

The Economist has endorsed the Liberal Democrats one week out from polling day. It says they "consider a vote for the Lib Dems as a down-payment for the future."

The influential magazine argues that "the leaders of both main parties have turned away from a decades-old vision of an open, liberal country" leaving only Tim Farron and the Liberal Democrats representing the large majority of British voters who want to live in an open, tolerant and united Britain.

Why the Liberal Democrats get our vote <https://t.co/jGLUiSsFi8>

– The Economist (@TheEconomist) [June 1, 2017](#)

The Liberal Democrats, like the experts at The Economist, believe that Britain should remain open: to business, investment and people. This used to be common-sense but both the Conservatives and Labour have abandoned the centre ground. Theresa May is pursuing an extreme Brexit that will damage our economy and our relationship with our neighbours whilst, Corbyn has veered off to what the Economist dubs as "the loony left". This leaves us, standing up for those who want a better future for their children.

Spelling out the reasons to vote Liberal Democrat on 8 June, The Economist says it boils down to the fact that:

- We want membership of the single market and free movement.
- We are more honest than the Tories about the need to raise taxes for public services;
- And more sensible than Labour, spreading the burden rather than leaning only on high-earners
- We are on the right side of other issues: for devolution of power from London, reform of the voting system and the House of Lords, and regulation of markets for drugs and sex

We are the "radical centre, essential for a thriving, prosperous Britain" as The Economist puts it. Vote Lib Dem on 8 June.

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## Five times Tim Farron showed he was the TV debate winner

In last night's leaders' debate, Tim Farron did what he always does: he held the other parties' feet to the fire.

With style and substance, he called them out on their failures and communicated a positive vision for Britain's future.

Theresa May, meanwhile, didn't even show up – demonstrating her complacency and utter disdain for the British people.

Here are five times Tim Farron came out on top:

### **1.**

When he exploded Twitter by asking where Theresa May was: "She might be outside, sizing up your house".

### **2.**

When he called out Corbyn for supporting Brexit: "If Jeremy cared, he would not have trooped through the lobbies with the Conservatives and UKIP to trigger Article 50."

### **3.**

When he scolded UKIP and the Tories for their anti-immigration policies: "The Conservative immigration policy is written to appease UKIP."

### **4.**

When he celebrated European unity and shared values in the face of terrorism: "We must stand together with our neighbours to fight it."

### **5.**

When he said the British people's time would be better spent watching Bake Off than listening to Theresa May: "She can't be bothered, so why should you?"