

How the manifesto pledges measure up



LABOUR
Government knows best



CONSERVATIVE
Big society not big state



LIBERAL DEMOCRAT
End to red-blue government



ECONOMY Defer spending cuts and big tax rises until 2011. Support high-tech companies, shift towards green economy

Boost business investment. Reform banking system. Reverse Labour's increase in employers' National Insurance Contributions

Split up banking system so banks cannot combine retail and "casino" banking. 10% levy on bank profits as recognition of taxpayer bail-out

PUBLIC FINANCES Cut £167 billion budget deficit by more than half by 2014 through growth, tax rises and spending cuts

Start reducing deficit immediately with £6bn spending cuts. One-year freeze on public sector pay for all but one million lowest paid workers

Save £10bn a year. No income tax on first £10,000 of earnings. Free 3.6m people on low incomes from having to pay any income tax at all

HEALTH CARE Protect NHS budget from real cuts until 2013. All hospitals to become NHS foundation trusts

Increase spending – cut cost of NHS bureaucracy by a third. Give patients right to choose own GP and hospital

Cut NHS waste to invest in frontline services. Enable citizens to take control of local NHS

EDUCATION Increase spending on schools until 2013. Allow takeovers of failing schools

Restore discipline and order to classrooms. Allow parents to set up new publicly-funded schools

Spend extra £2.5bn to cut class sizes and ensure children get individual attention. Scrap university tuition fees

IMMIGRATION Cut numbers with Australian-style points-based system

Introduce annual limit on numbers of non-EU economic migrants

Regional points-based system to reflect regional labour requirements

DEFENCE Conduct Strategic Defence Review to "equip Armed Forces for 21st century challenges, and support our troops and veterans"

Cut spending on unnecessary and bureaucratic EU defence plans and spend money on Armed Forces. Replace Trident nuclear deterrent

No to like-for-like Trident replacement. Develop geo-political strategy in Afghanistan to bring British troops home during next Parliament

POLITICAL REFORM Referendum on replacing first-past-the-post voting system to "alternative vote". Reform House of Lords

Root out sleaze by publishing MPs' expenses online. Cut number of MPs by 10% as part of reform to cut cost of government

Introduce proportional representation with single transferable vote. Introduce written constitution. All MPs and Lords to pay full British taxes