

The Policy Book of the

OXFORD STUDENTS LIBERAL ASSOCIATION



Michaelmas Term 2025

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INTRODUCTION

The Association's first Policy Meeting was held in Trinity Term 2025. The purpose is for politically interested members to debate the issues of the day, both domestic and international, in a more serious manner than may happen at some of our socials. The Policy Meeting has since been incorporated into the Week 3 General Meeting. Association Policy is the responsibility of the Political Officer.

As of Michaelmas 2025, all Motions are to remain in this Policy Book for the 5 full terms after their passage. It is our hope that over the course of time, this Policy Book will become a dynamic and living reflection of the opinions of our members.

TRINITY TERM 2025

This House is YIMBY

Policy 1 - Trinity Term 2025

Debate Summary

Members were in agreement that the building of housing and infrastructure is essential to the economic progression of the state, expressed its distaste for the current state of that nation's planning laws, and were keen to express its support for more building at a large scale.

This House condemns the Town and Country Planning Act

Policy 2 - Trinity Term 2025

Debate Summary

Inspired by debate on the previous motion, members were asked to debate whether the Town and Country Planning Act was the 'worst piece of legislation ever'. This was felt to be superlative, and would require the Act to be tested against every other piece of legislation ever, though members were in agreement that it had been highly restrictive on Britain's ability to build at scale. Hence, the motion was passed as amended.

This House supports the establishment of the Supreme Court

Policy 3 - Trinity Term 2025

Debate Summary

Members were initially faced with the motion ‘this House regrets the abolition of the Appellate Committee of the House of Lords.’ Arguments were made that the Law Lords were a great British institution, that reflected the sovereignty of Parliament. Others argued that the Supreme Court has improved public perception of the separation of powers. Members concluded, though divided, that they supported the existence of the Supreme Court.

This House supports political stunts

Policy 4 - Trinity Term 2025

Debate Summary

The successful election campaign of 2024 was up for debate in this motion - where members considered the merits of Sir Ed Davey’s numerous electoral stunts. It was eventually concluded that by gaining significant media attention for the party, the stunts had been successful.

MICHAELMAS TERM 2025

This House strongly supports English devolution, but believes you can only have that if you have rational medium to upper sized units of administration.

Policy 5 - proposed by Harry Morgan, Pembroke and amended by Will Lawson, Mansfield.

Debate Summary

The original motion proposed was that ‘This House urges the government’s Local Government Reform to actually devolve powers and improve local representation.’ Objection was voiced to existing party policy of abolishing many of Oxfordshire’s councils. Opposition was noted on the grounds that Oxfordshire is too small an area to have effective local government. The House comes to a consensus that the three-tiered model of North Oxfordshire, South Oxfordshire and Oxford City is a reasonable compromise, and passes the motion as amended.

This House supports changing the target for Net Zero to 2040 and encourages Government to take meaningful action to enact the target

Policy 6 - proposed by Harry Morgan, Pembroke and amended by Will Lawson, Mansfield and Zagham Farhan, University.

Debate Summary

The original motion was that ‘this House supports keeping the target of Net Zero by 2050.’ It was noted that we should be active in criticising failures of the Labour and Conservative parties to be bold and effective on climate change. Members also noted that Governments regularly set targets but fail to meet them, as such the amendment encouraging ‘meaningful action’ was added. Members disagreed on reducing the target to 2040, the dispute mainly centring around how plausible reaching such a target was, with those in favour arguing that government should be bolder in addressing climate change. Eventually, amending the target from 2050 to 2040 passed narrowly.

This House believes the United Kingdom should join a CANZUK alliance

Policy 7 - Michaelmas Term 2025. Proposed by Zagham Farhan, University.

Debate Summary

There was a brief question on the practicalities of a mutual foreign policy, but the motion passed without any objection.

BACKGROUND

(a) Internationalism is a key principle of liberal politics and of the Liberal Democrats.

(b) Recent failures of the United States to uphold the rules-based world order have demonstrated an increasing need for other democratic nations to cooperate.

(c) We live in an increasingly dangerous world, yet the United Kingdom would struggle to stand alone in an armed conflict, and would thus benefit significantly from defence pacts that do not rely on the USA.

(d) A ‘CANZUK’ alliance is incredibly popular across all four nations, polling support at 68% in Britain, 73% in Australia, 76% in Canada, and 82% in New Zealand.

(e) CANZUK has been accepted as formal cross-party policy in both New Zealand and Canada - including an explicit endorsement from the Canadian Liberals. Sir Ed Davey recently expressed his support in the Financial Times.

OSLA BELIEVES THAT:

- (a) Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom share a number of important cultural and political similarities, shared interests and existing mutual co-operation.
- (b) The world needs liberal democracies to be aligned, to ensure the continuation of the rules based world order, and the maintenance of liberal values against tyranny and authoritarianism.
- (c) The United Kingdom should be part of a formal CANZUK alliance that encompasses the following:
 - (i) Significantly enhanced defence co-operation, and a mutual assistance pact.
 - (ii) Increased co-operation on foreign affairs, presenting joint foreign policy where possible.
 - (iii) Frictionless free trade across the four nations.
 - (iv) Free movement of people across the four nations.
- (d) Such an alliance would be highly beneficial to UK defence, as well as mutually beneficial for the other three partners. The CANZUK Armed Forces would be the third largest in the world, with presence across the globe.
- (e) The United Kingdom, as a part of CANZUK, would be richer, safer and more powerful internationally.

OSLA RESOLVES THAT:

- (a) The Liberal Democrats should take an active role in proposing CANZUK, including adopting it as formal policy and including it in future manifestos.
- (b) Where possible, the Liberal Democrats and Young Liberals should support any and all policies that achieve the aims of increased defence co-operation, increased trade and other increased co-operation. An example would be supporting a youth mobility scheme between the four nations.
- (c) That the United Kingdom should join a full CANZUK alliance, with joint foreign policy, a central military command, free movement of people, free trade, a co-ordinated space policy, and other forms of co-operation.
- (d) Such an Alliance should be available to other nations that can demonstrate the same shared values, interests, military capability, rule of law and other necessary factors as may be determined.

This House believes deeper and more equal devolution is essential for the future of the United Kingdom

Policy 8 - Michaelmas Term 2025. Proposed by Richanne Davies, University and amended by Will Lawson, Mansfield.

Debate Summary

The original motion was that ‘this House believes a United Kingdom is increasingly untenable.’ It was argued that Wales and Scotland do not have sufficient powers, and that nationalist politics is growing in each of the non-English nations. Members disagreed over exactly which powers should be devolved to the relevant nations’ legislatures. It was collectively agreed that greater devolution, or indeed federalism, is essential to the future of the United Kingdom and hence the motion was passed as amended.