

- Not accept the dogma that government cannot lead or innovate and has no entrepreneurial drive. We will set *creative government* free.
- Recognise that *efficiency in public services* does matter, provided it is not at the cost of poor service or exploitation of staff. We would expect to find very modest savings of 0.3% over 50% of the government's operations each successive year. In contrast, the Coalition has too often described actual cuts in public services as efficiency savings.

### Green MP Caroline Lucas and the Public Service Users Bill

In January 2014, inspired by We Own It, Green MP Caroline Lucas presented in Parliament a plan to defend our public services. Her Public Service Users Bill would:

- Make public ownership the default option before any service is sold off.
- Ensure people are asked – and genuinely listened to – before any service is put out to tender.
- Give the public a right to recall private companies if they're running our services poorly.
- Make private companies running public services more transparent.

## A NEW CONSTITUTIONAL SETTLEMENT

UK politics is rooted in the past and has lost touch with the present. Our Parliament looks back to feudal times rather than forward to democratic times; we cling to 18 as the age of political maturity despite young people's growing sophistication and capacity to make decisions for themselves; we legitimise corruption through unfair funding of political parties; our MPs pay more attention to their parties than to the people when it comes to voting – constituents need to be re-empowered.

To put this right the Green Party will:

- Move towards a *written constitution* with a Bill of Rights.
- Bring in *proportional representation* (PR) using the Additional Member System for parliamentary elections and continue fixed-term Parliaments. Only the 200,000 votes in marginal seats really counted in the last election – that's less than 0.5% of those eligible to vote. We would make everyone's vote count.
- Introduce the right to vote at 16.
- *Reform the House of Lords* to become a fully elected body chosen by PR; but, to promote its independence, members should be elected for only one fixed term of ten years, with half the House being elected every five years.
- Bring in a fair system of *state funding for political parties* so there's no longer a need for reliance on private and trade union donations, which can have a corrupting effect.
- Ensure that all lobbying, and in particular *corporate lobbying*, is registered and fully disclosed, including lobbying of elected politicians and of civil servants.
- Immediately repeal the unsatisfactory *Lobbying Act*, so that civil society organisations can campaign properly.
- Retain the principle that human rights are the common property of the whole world by keeping the *Human Rights Act* and retaining the UK's membership of the European Convention on Human Rights and the Council of Europe.
- Aspire to a *50:50 Parliament* by 2025 with equal numbers of women and men.
- Introduce *referendums on local government decisions* if called for by 20% of the local electorate.
- Introduce *recall referendums on MPs* and other representatives if 20% of electors request it.
- Make equality before the law a fundamental constitutional right. But this is only a reality if all can afford to use the law. We would restore the cuts to *Legal Aid*, costing around £700 million a year.