

Manifesto Review, General Election 2017

The National Heritage Science Forum has reviewed the manifestos of the four main UK parties, and highlights below the key policies with a bearing on the heritage science community.

Conservative

The Conservatives' key ideas have already been set out in the Industrial Strategy Green Paper. The commitment to the 'Modern Industrial Strategy' aims to deliver a stronger economy and spread wealth and opportunity across the country.

The manifesto includes:

- The statement that long-term prosperity depends on science, technology and innovation
- The ambition that the UK should be the most innovative country in the world
- Increased investment in R&D to meet the current OECD average for investment of 2.4% of GDP within 10 years and a longer-term goal of 3%.
- An increase in the number of scientists working in the UK and policies to enable scientists from other countries to work in the UK.
- A regulatory environment that encourages innovation with universities to lead expansion in R&D capacity.
- A restated commitment to the £23 billion National Productivity Investment Fund targeted towards housing, R&D, economic infrastructure and skills.
- A look at how the visa system can become better aligned to the Modern Industrial Strategy.
- Commitment to scientific collaboration with EU countries (but no commitment to buying into Horizon 2020 or the 9th Framework Programme)
- Commitment to the central role of arts and culture in amplifying Britain's voice in the world
- Placing arts and culture at the centre of regeneration of modern Britain
- A commitment to free entry to the permanent collections of national museums and galleries
- Plans to share the works and expertise of most eminent museums around the UK
- The introduction of a new cultural development fund, using cultural investment to turn around communities
- Commitment to the Great Exhibition of the North in 2018 to celebrate achievements in innovation, the arts and engineering
- Commitment to 'leading the world' in environmental protection
- Removing the barriers that hold back small firms with big potential
- Support for new scientific and technical institutions (led by employers and linked to universities)
- The creation of 3 million apprenticeships for young people by 2020 and exploration of teaching apprenticeships sponsored by major companies, especially in STEM subjects.

<https://www.conservatives.com/manifesto>

Labour

Central to Labour's manifesto is the National Transformation Fund through which £250 billion will be invested over 10 years in upgrading the economy. In addition the manifesto states the intention to:

- Harness the economic potential of new technologies and science; completing the Science Vale transport arc from Oxford to Cambridge, through Milton Keynes.
- Create an innovation nation with the highest proportion of high-skilled jobs in the OECD, meeting the target of 3% of GDP on R&D by 2030
- Establish 'councils' for industrial sectors of strategic significance and create a National Investment Bank to help to deliver its industrial strategy by prioritising spending in line with objectives
- Provide a unilateral guarantee of rights to all EU nationals living in the UK
- Reject a 'no deal' Brexit
- Continue to work constructively with EU and other European nations on issues such as climate change
- Ensure the UK maintains its leading research role by seeking to remain part of Horizon 2020 and its successor programmes as well as Erasmus
- Welcome research staff to the UK
- Ensure 60% of the UK's energy comes from zero-carbon renewables by 2030
- Introduce a Clean Air Act
- Fund robust flood resilience
- Stewardship of the environment to be founded on sound principles and based on scientific evidence – a science innovation fund will be established
- Reclaim Britain's leading role in tackling climate change
- Put the UK's world-class creative sector at the heart of negotiations with the EU and the party's future industrial strategy
- Introduce a £1 billion Cultural Capital Fund to upgrade existing cultural and creative infrastructure to be ready for the digital age
- Invest in creative clusters across the country based on a similar model to enterprise zones
- Maintain free entry to national museums
- End cuts to local authority budgets to support libraries, museums and galleries

<http://www.labour.org.uk/index.php/manifesto2017>

Liberal Democrats

The Liberal Democrats' manifesto is largely focused on Brexit and pledges a vote on the Brexit deal, including the option to stay in the EU. The manifesto includes:

- A unilateral guarantee of rights for EU nationals in the UK
- A pledge from the Party to use its influence to secure the same rights for UK citizens living in EU countries
- Commitment to protecting Erasmus+ and other EU-funded schemes which include opportunities for young people
- Commitment to maintaining high environmental standards in law and including the closest possible cooperation [with the EU] on climate and energy [policy]

- Statements about the negative impact of the Leave vote on existing and proposed research programmes and a promise to campaign against any reduction in investment in UK universities and their right to apply for EU funds on equal terms
- Fight to retain access to Horizon 2020 and Marie Skłodowska-Curie actions funding, and promote international collaboration
- Guarantee to underwrite funding for British partners in EU-funded projects such as Horizon 2020 who would suffer from cancellation of income on Brexit
- Develop skilled workforce to support growth with major expansion of high-quality apprenticeships; support for life-long learning
- Commitment to protecting the science budget and raising it in line with inflation with the aim of doubling R&D spending across the economy
- Support growth in the creative industries, promoting creative and digital skills
- Pass five green laws - Green Transport Act, Zero-Carbon Britain Act, Nature Act, Green Buildings Act and Zero-Waste Act
- Retrofit 4m properties with insulation by 2022
- Establish a £2bn flood prevention fund
- Maintain free access to national museums and galleries

<http://www.libdems.org.uk/manifesto>

Scottish National Party (SNP)

The SNP's manifesto is framed around making sure Scotland's voice is heard in Brexit negotiations. It includes:

- SNP MPs continuing to work with Scotland's universities and institutions to seek clarity from the UK government on funding for vital research currently funded through EU programmes like Horizon 2020.
- Calling for a Scottish representative to be a standing member of the UK Research and Innovation Board which decides on the allocation of UK research funding to UK universities
- Support for the continuation of programmes like Erasmus + so that students can travel to Europe for study
- Pressing the UK government to confirm the rights of EU nationals to remain in the UK as a matter of urgency; and for the rights of UK nationals living in the EU to be guaranteed in the same way.
- Setting out the process for Scotland's membership of the EU
- See a guarantee from the UK government that they will seek the consent of the Scottish Parliament to the terms of the Brexit Bill
- Press the Westminster government to include onshore wind in its industrial strategy and work to secure the funding needed to develop Carbon Capture and Storage technology in Scotland
- Press the UK government to match Scotland's commitment and ambition to fight climate change
- Work to prevent the threat of Brexit being used by the UK to reduce commitments to tackle climate change or to undermine the EU's efforts to fight climate change and protect the environment
- Defend the interests of environmental scientists from across the EU who contribute so much to the success of Scotland's research institutes.

<https://www.snp.org/manifesto>