



# CRD KEY FACTS

*Updated: 30 March 2005*

**NOTE: UNLESS OTHERWISE STATED ALL FACTS COMPARE TO 1997**

**So: There have been 66 tax rises [since 1997]**

**Conservative Research Department**

[www.conservatives.com](http://www.conservatives.com)

## **Cleaner Hospitals**

**5,000 people die a year from infections contracted in hospital.**

## **More Police**

**One million violent crimes were committed last year.**

## **Lower Taxes**

**Labour have raised taxes 66 times.**

## **School Discipline**

**A teacher is assaulted every seven minutes.**

## **Controlled Immigration**

**Immigration has tripled under Labour.**

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## **ECONOMY**

### **TAX**

- Labour have raised taxes 66 times by stealth.
- Tax has gone up by £5,000 per household in the UK.
- Labour's 66 stealth tax rises equate to 16.5 pence on the basic rate of income tax.
- Typical pensioners have seen more than a third of the increase in the basic state pension snatched back in higher council tax.
- If council tax continues soaring at the same rate it has under Tony Blair so far, it would hit £2,000 if he is re-elected.
- Families who bought their council flats in the 1980s are now being hit by inheritance tax.
- The average home-buyer has seen their stamp-duty bill double.
- The poorest fifth of households pay a higher proportion of their income in taxes than any other group.
- People earning the average salary of £25,170 pay a combined marginal rate of income tax and NI of 33 per cent.
- Four million more people are paying income tax under Labour. People working 20 hours a week at the minimum wage have to pay income tax and national insurance.
- 1.35 million more people pay top rate tax, including warrant officers, hospital matrons in London, police inspectors and deputy head teachers.
- Pensioners are seeing their pension funds raided by £5 billion a year because of the abolition of pension fund tax allowances.

### **ECONOMY AND BUSINESS**

- We save only just over half of what we did in 1997.
- Britain's productivity growth rate has fallen by a third.
- We now have the biggest trade deficit since the 17<sup>th</sup> Century.
- The effectiveness of Britain's government spending has dropped from fifth to twenty-second in the world.
- Britain has dropped from fourth to eleventh in the World Economic Forum's international competitiveness league.
- Britain's economy has grown more slowly than any other major economy in the English-speaking world.
- Income per head is lower in Britain than in the Republic of Ireland for the first time ever.
- The British stock market has under-performed every major market except for Japan's.
- Under Labour, there have been 15 new regulations every working day.

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- The British Chambers of Commerce now estimate that the cost of new regulations on business is nearly £40 billion.

### **CONSERVATIVE ACTION**

- **On the first day of a Conservative Government, we will freeze civil service recruitment.**
- **Within the first week, we will put a stop to wasteful inspection regimes in local government.**
- **Within the first month, our first Budget will cut wasteful government spending. This will give taxpayers value for money and stop Labour's third term tax rises.**
- **We will cut regulations. We will ensure that the total regulatory burden imposed by government falls each year. We will introduce sunset clauses in new regulation. And like America we will exempt small businesses from many regulations altogether.**

## **FAT GOVERNMENT**

- The Civil Service is now the size of Sheffield.
- Whitehall bureaucracy costs every household £850 a year.
- The number of tax collectors has increased almost twice as fast as the number of new doctors and nurses.
- There are now more tax collectors and customs officers than people serving in the Royal Navy and Royal Air Force put together.
- One Department – Work and Pensions – employs more people than there are soldiers in the British Army.
- There are more DEFRA bureaucrats than there are dairy farms in England.
- An extra 12,000 civil servants were employed last year.
- The number of new bureaucrats and support staff in education has increased twice as fast as the number of new teachers.
- The number of NHS managers is increasing three times as fast as the number of new doctors and nurses.
- The James Review proposed that the Department of Health has wasted £7.9 billion. This money could have instead paid for 1.7 million hip replacement operations.
- For every extra police officer, almost one more bureaucrat has been employed in the Home Office.
- The running costs of the Government Offices for the Regions would pay for an extra 5,000 nurses or teachers.
- Council inspection costs could be reduced by £1 billion a year.
- There are more external targets on schools than days in the school year.
- 12 pages of paperwork land on each head teacher's desk each day of the school year.
- 15 new regulations have been created every working day since 1997.
- The Ministry of Defence bought new chairs for their civil servants at a cost of £1,000 each.
- For every job the private sector lost last year, the public sector took on almost two jobs.

## **LAW & ORDER**

*(all figures are compared to 1998-9)*

### **CRIME**

- Gun crime has doubled under Labour. In 2003-4, a gun crime was committed every hour in Britain.
- Violent crime is up 83 per cent. For the first time ever, more than a million violent crimes were committed last year. That is more than the combined populations of Manchester and Liverpool.
- Robbery has gone up by 51 per cent.
- 825,000 more crimes were committed in 2003-4 than in 1998-9 – even though Home Office spending has risen by £5 billion. That is nearly £200 per household.
- Fewer than one in four crimes are now cleared up. This is down from just under one in three crimes when Michael Howard was Home Secretary.
- Only 13 per cent of recorded burglaries are cleared up.
- Fewer than half of all violent crimes are cleared up – compared to almost two thirds when Michael Howard was Home Secretary.

### **POLICE PAPERWORK**

- Since 2000, more than 350 new regulations have been placed on the police.
- Filling in each Stop and Account form, recommended by the MacPherson Report, takes about seven minutes.
- Police officers spend almost as much time at their desks as they do on the streets fighting crime.
- The Home Office has employed 17,600 more bureaucrats – but only around 13,000 additional police officers.

### **PRISON**

- Over 3,700 offences have been committed since 1999 by prisoners released under Labour's early release scheme – more than 500 of which were violent crimes.

## **DRUGS**

- Labour have sent mixed signals on drugs. On the one hand, Tony Blair has called for drug testing in schools. On the other hand, David Blunkett reclassified cannabis as a Class C drug.
- In 2003 the number of hard drug users reached one million – an all-time high.

## **CONSERVATIVE ACTION**

- **On the first day of a Conservative Government, we will announce plans to prevent police officers having to fill in a form every time they stop someone.**
- **Within the first week, we will end Labour's early release from prison scheme.**
- **Within the first month, we will start our new prison building programme and the recruitment of an extra 5,000 police officers each year.**
- **Conservatives will increase the number of drug rehabilitation places from 2,300 to 25,000 – enough for every hard drug addict aged 16-24.**
- **Conservatives will provide funding to restore the number of Special Constables to their 1997 level.**
- **Conservatives will fully review the effects of the Human Rights Act – and if it cannot be reformed we will repeal it.**
- **Conservatives will curb pointless paperwork and political correctness. Conservatives will slash the police paperwork that keeps policemen and women handcuffed to their desks.**
- **Conservatives will reverse Labour's reclassification of cannabis.**
- **Our programme of prison building will increase the number of prison places by 20,000 places over five years. Home Office projections predict a prison population of around 100,000 at the end of the decade but only 80,000 prison places are planned.**

## ASYLUM & IMMIGRATION

### ASYLUM

- Only one in five failed asylum seekers is ever removed.
- There are now over 250,000 failed asylum seekers, equivalent to a town the size of Brighton, living in Britain who have no right to be here.
- The cost of asylum-seeker support to local councils has risen thirtyfold in eight years to £3 billion. This is equivalent to £142 per household.
- The average annual number of asylum applications (including dependants) under Mr Blair has almost been double the number when Michael Howard was Home Secretary, up from 40,740 to 73,128.
- In the last three years there have been only 9 prosecutions and 3 convictions for employing illegal immigrants.

### IMMIGRATION

- Immigration has tripled under Labour. Total net immigration to Britain has averaged 157,000 people a year between 1997 and 2003; between 1993 and 1997 the average was 50,000. This is equivalent to a town the size of Peterborough arriving in the UK every year.
- Grants of settlement have tripled.
- The number of work permits issued has almost quadrupled since Labour came to office.
- According to the Government's own predictions, Britain's population will grow by 6.1 million over the next thirty years – equivalent to six times the population of Birmingham. Immigration will account for 84 per cent of that increase, or five times the population of Birmingham.
- John Prescott plans to build an extra 3.8 million homes in England over the next twenty years – 700,000 of them (that is 18 per cent) are due to net immigration.
- David Blunkett has said that he sees 'no obvious upper limit to legal immigration' and that he has not 'got a clue' how many people are in the UK unofficially.
- Charles Clarke said: 'We want more migration, more people coming to study and to work. We want more people coming to look for refuge' (*Evening Standard*, 14 February 2005).
- The legal aid budget for asylum and immigration has risen from £26 million in 1996-7 to £204 million in 2003-4, an increase of 682 per cent.

## **CONSERVATIVE ACTION**

- **Conservatives will bring back embarkation controls for non-EU countries, which Labour abolished in 1998, so that we know who has left the country.**
- **Conservatives will ensure that levels of immigration to the UK are set in Britain's best interests. Parliament will set an annual limit on immigration each year.**
- **Conservatives will restore strict controls on the number of people issued with a work permit.**
- **Conservatives will pull out of the 1951 Refugee Convention, as is our right, by giving twelve months' notice to the UN Secretary General, and replace it with British legislation that will allow cases to be decided more swiftly.**
- **Conservatives will break the link between arrival and claim. Our long term goal is that asylum claims will no longer be considered in the UK. Instead Britain will take refugees in the care of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees.**
- **Conservatives will detain potential security risks – all those existing asylum claimants who are found to have no documents.**

## EDUCATION

### STANDARDS

- One in three eleven-year-olds leaves school unable to write properly.
- 44,000 children left school last year without a single GCSE.
- The number of failing schools has risen by nearly a third in the last year.

### SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

- A million children play truant every year. Labour promised to cut truancy by a third - instead it has risen by a third.
- There is an assault on a teacher every seven minutes.
- 31 per cent of teachers considering leaving the profession cited poor pupil behaviour as one of their reasons.
- Appeals panels overrule head teachers on expulsions in one in five cases, returning disruptive pupils to school.

### CHOICE

- 93,000 parents made appeals in one year against the school their child was allocated by the Local Education Authority. Only 24 per cent were upheld.

### BUREAUCRACY

- The Government sends schools on average 12 pages of paperwork for every school day.
- There are now more external controls and targets than there are days in the school year.
- 130,000 more secondary school pupils are now in classes with more than 30 pupils.

### TOP-UP FEES

- Labour's top-up fees, which they promised not to introduce in their 2001 election manifesto, mean that average student debt will rise to around £25,000. Students from poorer backgrounds will be charged fees for the first time.

### CONSERVATIVE ACTION

- **On the first day of a Conservative Government, we will set out plans to give head teachers the power to expel disruptive pupils.**
- **Within the first week, we will set out our programme to abolish the restrictions which stop good schools expanding and new ones opening, as well as centrally-set targets for schools.**

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- **Within the first month, we will include in the Queen's Speech a Bill to give parents the opportunity to choose the best school for their children.**
- **Conservatives will increase spending on schools by a third during the next Parliament, from £47 billion in 2005-06 to £62 billion by 2009-10.**
- **Conservatives will increase overall school capacity by 600,000 places, so that parents have the Right to Choose which school to send their child.**
- **Conservatives will open up the education system to new entrants. If an independent body – be it private or charitable – provides schooling which meets our standards and costs the same per pupil as a maintained school, that school will be eligible for government funding.**
- **We will abolish AS levels, retain and strengthen the A-level and introduce tough external assessment of exam standards.**
- **Conservatives will abolish top-up fees – access to higher education should depend on merit, not the ability to pay.**

## HEALTH

### DIRTY HOSPITALS

- The incidence of the hospital superbug MRSA has more than doubled since 1997, despite Labour's 23 'initiatives' to tackle the problem. Hospital-acquired infections kill 5,000 people a year – more than the number who die on Britain's roads.

### HOSPITAL PERFORMANCE

- Over one million people are still waiting for treatment on the NHS.
- 1.4 million more people would be getting hospital treatment if Labour had kept up the rate of increase in completed hospital treatments achieved by the NHS under the Conservatives.
- Death rates from respiratory disease in the UK are nearly twice the EU average and worse than Azerbaijan, Albania, Ukraine and Romania.
- Lung cancer, one of the biggest killers in Britain, has survival rates lower than Estonia, Slovakia and Slovenia. Breast cancer survival rates are the lowest in Western Europe.
- The Government has failed to fulfil its promises, made in both the 1997 and the 2001 Manifestos, to abolish mixed-sex wards.

### DENTISTRY

- Tony Blair promised that everyone would have the chance to see their dentist. Only 38.8 per cent of the adult population and 54.6 per cent of children are registered with an NHS dentist.

### POOR VALUE FOR MONEY

- The number of managers in the NHS is increasing three times as fast as the number of doctors and nurses.
- Spending on hospital and community services has increased by nearly 30 per cent between 1999 and 2003, but the number of hospital treatments only went up by just under 5 per cent.
- Despite Labour's 66 tax rises, over one million people in the UK are waiting for treatment on the NHS.
- Hospital infections cost the NHS £1 billion a year. £1 billion would pay for 47,000 nurses, 14,000 doctors or over 220,000 hip replacement operations.
- Despite the increased spending on the NHS, productivity has fallen by nearly one per cent per year since 1997. If the private sector was run like the NHS, the economy would have been in recession for the past seven years.

## **CONSERVATIVE ACTION**

- **On the first day of a Conservative Government, we will abolish Whitehall targets which mean hospitals cannot close beds or wards for cleaning. Doctors and nurses should control our hospitals.**
- **Within the first week, we will make it possible for people to have access to information about hospital performance, including on infection rates. Patients will be able to tell how likely they are to contract infection in a hospital department. Hospitals will also have to publish their action plans on how they are fighting infections. Local hospitals should be made accountable to patients.**
- **Within the first month, we will set out our programme of legislation to give patients the right to choose to be treated in any hospital that provides NHS standards of care at NHS costs. Patients should not be forced to be treated in dirty hospitals.**
- **Within the first month, we will set out plans to support infection control teams and recruit more front-line staff to back up hospitals' efforts to fight infection. Rapid action is needed to stop infections spreading.**
- **Within the first year, we will set out how we can boost training in infection control. Health professionals and cleaners need to know best practice.**
- **Within the first year, We will speed up work to bring new solutions for combating hospital-acquired infection into local hospitals. The latest science and research needs to be used to combat MRSA.**
- **Conservatives will give hospitals freedom from Whitehall control, by allowing them to become foundation trusts with increased powers to manage their own affairs.**
- **Patients will be able to be treated in a private hospital for free, provided it charges the same tariff as the NHS.**

## WORK & PENSIONS

### PENSIONS

- Pension funds have been raided by £5 billion a year because of Labour's pension tax.
- 65,000 people have lost retirement savings because their company pension schemes have been closed.
- There are now over 5 million pensioners subjected to means testing, nearly half of all pensioners.
- The Pension Credit is so complicated and unpopular that 1.6 million eligible pensioners fail to receive the money to which they are entitled.
- Typical pensioners have seen more than a third of the increase in the basic state pension snatched back in higher council tax.

### WELFARE

- There are two million people defined as 'economically inactive' but who want to work – they do not appear in the official unemployment figures.
- There are over a million people parked on incapacity benefits who want to work – they do not appear in the official unemployment figures.
- There are over a million young people not in work or full-time education.
- The New Deal has cost £6 billion but less than a third of the people put through it move into sustained employment – the rest just go back onto benefits.
- At least £3 billion of taxpayers' money disappears each year in benefit fraud.
- Over two million pensioners still live in poverty.
- Labour have fiddled the child poverty figures to remove 900,000 children from their lists.

### CONSERVATIVE ACTION

- **Conservatives will raise the basic state pension in line with earnings, not prices. This will give pensioners a bigger state pension and set many people free from the need to claim means tested benefits.**
- **Conservatives will cut council tax bills for households where the occupants are over 65 by half, giving pensioners up to £500 every year.**
- **Conservatives will help people with broken career records, due to caring for children or sick relatives, by giving them credits to build up a contributory state pension.**
- **Conservatives will help people who have lost their company pension savings due to their firm going bust by using the unclaimed assets of dormant bank accounts to replenish their pension funds.**

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- **Conservatives will create new incentives to save with a Lifetime Savings Account. On the principle of 'buy one get one free', we will reward people's savings with government contributions.**
- **Conservatives will scrap the failing new deal and allow specialist welfare-to-work contractors from the voluntary and commercial sectors to help people into jobs that last.**

## TRANSPORT

### RAIL

- One in six trains run late under Labour, nearly 10 per cent more than in 1997.
- Railway crime has risen. There are now 24 violent crimes a day on the trains and tube - one an hour.
- Despite railways receiving a public subsidy of £3.5 billion in 2003-4, trains in London are now more overcrowded than in 1998-9.
- Labour promised a 50 per cent increase in rail use, but only a tiny 5.8 per cent growth rate has been achieved since 2000.

### MOTORISTS

- Labour takes almost £8 billion more off motorists today in Vehicle Excise Duty and Fuel Duty than they paid in 1996-7.
- In 2000 Labour promised to reduce congestion 5 per cent by 2010, but congestion will have risen by 20 per cent by 2010.
- In 1998, the 140 approved road building and improvement schemes inherited from the Conservatives were cut to 37; the rest were superseded by 'Multi-Modal Studies', more bureaucratic appraisals which have so far cost over £35 million in paperwork.
- Despite the massive growth in speed cameras from 200 to over 5,000, 77 more people were killed on the roads in 2003 than in 2002.
- The Confederation of British Industry says congestion costs industry up to £20 billion a year and congestion on key parts of the road network is worse than before Labour's Ten Year Plan to improve transport.

### CONSERVATIVE ACTION

- **Conservatives will remove speed cameras that raise money instead of saving lives.**
- **Conservatives will reduce bureaucracy by getting rid of 'safety camera partnerships'.**
- **Conservatives will raise speed limits where it is safe on motorways, lowering them outside schools and hospitals.**
- **Conservatives will allow vehicles with 3 or more adult passengers to use bus lanes to reduce urban congestion.**
- **Conservatives will identify 100 railway stations that need refurbishing and get private industry support to improve them.**
- **Conservatives will offer the best-performing train operating companies longer franchises in return for more investment.**

## **LOCAL GOVERNMENT & HOUSING**

### **COUNCIL TAX**

- The average Band D bill in England is £1,214 in 2005-06– an increase of 76 per cent (+£525) since Labour came to power, up from £689 in 1997-98.
- Council tax receipts across Britain have risen by £9 billion since 1997. This is equivalent to almost 3 per cent on the basic rate of income tax.
- A third of the increase in the basic state pension has been snatched back in higher council tax for the typical pensioner couple.
- Conservative councils cost less, charging an estimated £74 a year less on Band D bills than Labour councils, and £83 less than Liberal Democrat councils, in England in 2005-06.
- The highest council tax in Britain is in Tony Blair's Sedgefield – with a Labour MP, Labour district council and Labour county council, charging £1,428 on Band D in 2005-06.
- If council tax continues to soar at the same rate as it has under Tony Blair, it would hit £2,000 a year if Labour won a third term, thanks to more fiddled funding, a rigged council tax revaluation and new council tax bands.

### **HOUSING**

- The average home buyer is paying £950 extra in stamp duty under Labour.
- The amount of new social housing being built has plummeted by 41 per cent in England under Labour.
- Labour are planning to bulldoze 400,000 homes in the north, while building the equivalent of 26 towns the size of Slough on England's greenfields.
- The number of people living in B&Bs has almost doubled, and homelessness is up a third.

### **COSTLY BUREAUCRACY**

- The unelected regional chambers (the self-styled 'regional assemblies') are costing taxpayers £30 million a year, despite the fact that regional assemblies were decisively rejected in a referendum in the North East in November 2004.
- The running costs of the Government Offices for the Regions have increased by 44 per cent since 1997.
- A net total of £544 million of National Lottery money and £31 million of taxpayers' money has been spent on the failed Millennium Dome.

## **CONSERVATIVE ACTION**

- **Conservatives will halt Labour's third-term council tax rises. We will block plans for higher council tax bands on middle England and prevent the forthcoming revaluation being used to increase council tax further by stealth.**
- **We will cut council tax for older people, by introducing an automatic 50 per cent discount for the 65s and over, whilst protecting existing pensioner benefits.**
- **We will cut the unfunded red tape, regulations and directives on local authorities that have caused council tax to go through the roof.**
- **Conservatives will scale back the bloated inspection regime in local government, saving £1 billion a year.**
- **Conservatives will give local communities greater powers to protect their greenfields and Green Belt from unwanted and unsustainable development.**
- **Conservatives will give local people a greater say on local planning, including on controversial new mobile phone masts and wind farm developments.**
- **Conservatives will scrap Labour's bloated tiers of regional bureaucracy and give greater powers to local councils.**

# CONSTITUTION

## HUMAN RIGHTS

- The Human Rights Act has created too many spurious rights and has fuelled a compensation culture which is spiralling out of control.
- In the 21 years between 1975 and 1996, the European Convention on Human Rights was considered in 316 cases, and affected the outcome, reasoning or procedure in 16 of them. In the 18 months between October 2000 (when the Human Rights Act 1998 came into force) and April 2002, the ECHR was considered in 431 cases in the higher courts, and affected the outcome, reasoning or procedure in 318 of them.
- This amounts to a twenty-fold rise in the number of cases in which the Convention was considered.

## REFORMS

- Labour have failed to implement their 1997 and 2001 election pledges to make the House of Lords 'more democratic and representative'.
- The Constitutional Reform Bill was an ill-thought through announcement made on the back of a botched Cabinet reshuffle; the Lord Chief Justice was told only minutes before the press release was made public.
- As a result of Labour's reforms, the Lord Chancellor – the guarantor of judicial independence in the Cabinet – will no longer necessarily be a senior lawyer sitting in the Lords above normal party politics, but could be a relatively junior, politically ambitious Member of the Commons less able to stand up to stronger colleagues.

## CIVIL SERVICE

- The number of special advisers in Government has doubled since 1997 and their cost has nearly tripled from £1.8 million in 1996-7 to £5.3 million in 2003-4.
- Labour have given Labour Party appointees executive powers over senior civil servants.

## HOUSE OF COMMONS

- The Government has sought to avoid proper scrutiny in the House of Commons. In the 51 years from 1946 to 1997 only 67 Bills were guillotined. Under the present Government in the six years from 3rd June 1997 until 21st October 2003, 94 bills have been subjected to a guillotine of one sort or another.
- The Government has used Scottish MPs to force through legislation for England – for which there is no majority among English MPs and on matters which in Scotland are solely the responsibility of the Scottish Parliament.
- Labour have consistently sought to sideline and marginalise Parliament by making major policy announcements outside it, such as on the independence for the Bank of England and the review of our murder laws.

### **COSTLY BUREAUCRACY**

- The costs of the new Scottish Parliament building soared to £431 million - a massive increase on the original estimates of between £10-40 million.
- The Welsh Assembly building is costing £60 million – hugely more than the £17 million originally estimated.
- The Greater London Assembly’s building costs the taxpayer over £120 million a year.

### **CONSERVATIVE ACTION**

- **Within the first hour of taking office, Michael Howard will forbid party political advisers from telling civil servants what to do. This will protect the integrity of the civil service.**
- **Conservatives will keep the Lord Chancellor as the guarantor of judicial independence within our Constitution.**
- **Conservatives will abolish the unnecessary Department for Constitutional Affairs.**
- **Conservatives will introduce a Civil Service Bill to protect the independence and impartiality of the Civil Service from any future government, and ensure that political appointees are no longer able to misuse their powers.**
- **Conservatives will seek the widest possible consensus on reform of the House of Lords, with the purpose of establishing a stronger Second Chamber with the authority to hold the Government properly to account.**
- **Conservatives will address the so-called ‘West Lothian Question’ to prevent Scottish MPs being used to force unpopular policies on England, thereby restoring balance to the Constitution and strengthening the United Kingdom.**

## **ENVIRONMENT & AGRICULTURE**

### **AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES**

- Britain's self-sufficiency in food has declined by 9 per cent since 1997; farm output by 5 per cent; farming incomes by 14 per cent in real terms; and the agricultural labour force by 15 per cent.
- Over the past seven years, the effective rate of pay for dairy farmers has averaged £2.90 an hour, for a 70-hour week.
- It costs the UK dairy farmer between 18 and 23 pence to produce a litre of milk and yet, since 2000, average farm-gate prices have been only between 16 and 20 pence per litre.
- The Foot and Mouth crisis is estimated to have cost to the UK economy £10 billion by the Institute of Directors and resulted in the slaughter of about 10 million animals.
- Bovine TB is increasing by 20 per cent every year and is estimated to cost £2 billion over the next ten years without a cure being found.
- Between 1995 and 2002, British fishing saw a 25 percent reduction in catches.
- The Government only has 9 sniffer dogs guarding all 110 entry points to the UK to protect the public from the risk of illegal meat imports.

### **CLIMATE CHANGE AND ENERGY**

- Carbon dioxide emissions have risen under Labour. Conservative policies achieved a 6.9 per cent reduction between 1990 and 1997.
- The Government has admitted that, based on current policy, the UK will not achieve its 20 per cent reduction target by 2010, but will achieve a reduction of just 13 per cent. Much of this reduction is a result of the dash for gas under the Conservative Government.
- Renewable energy generation now stands at less than 3 per cent of our total energy generation.
- Despite Labour's pledge to eliminate fuel poverty, the Government has reduced insulation standards in social housing, causing extra emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> and leaving nearly two million people with cold homes and in fuel poverty.

### **RURAL DECAY**

- Rural dwellers are paying more in council tax than urban residents but receiving worse services owing to the way the Government distributes the central grant (Sparse Report *The Rural Council Tax Gap*, 2 August 2004).
- Homelessness in rural areas has risen by 30 per cent since Labour came to power – and is rising at more than three times the rate in urban areas (Countryside Agency *State of the Countryside Report* 2004).
- 3 rural post offices and 6 rural pubs are closing every week.
- 58 per cent of households in rural areas do not have access to a regular bus service.

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- Rural crime costs farmers £100 million a year, yet 98 per cent of parishes have no permanently staffed police station.

### **COSTLY BUREAUCRACY**

- According to the CBI, the direct cost to UK business of complying with environmental regulation is £4 billion a year.

### **CONSERVATIVE ACTION**

- **Conservatives will immediately abolish the Over Thirty Month Rule for cattle, which costs the British taxpayer £360 million a year and costs the cattle industry a further £100 million a year.**
- **Conservatives will abolish the Agricultural Wages Board.**
- **Conservatives will seek to strengthen the Code of Practice to improve transparency between the producers, retailers and processors in the farming industry, and would create a more helpful fiscal framework for the establishment of farming co-operatives.**
- **Conservatives will legislate to introduce clearer food labelling to enable consumers to make more informed choices and ensure that British products are labelled as such.**
- **Conservatives will seek further reform of the Common Agricultural Policy to allow simpler and more localised interpretation and implementation of the Single Farm Payment.**
- **Conservatives are committed to the phasing out of the use hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), which currently account for 2 per cent of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions, between 2008 and 2014.**
- **Conservatives will give the general public clear, self-funding incentives to invest in energy efficiency and expand Labour's Energy Efficiency Commitment to involve more groups and interested parties – retailers as well as the gas and electricity supply companies - to promote competition in energy efficiency.**
- **Conservatives would examine how the Climate Change Levy could be replaced by a more effective set of incentives on all non-domestic users of energy not covered by the EU Emissions Trading Scheme.**
- **Conservatives will continue to work closely with the construction industry to simplify the building regulations and achieve a road map to zero emissions new build.**
- **Conservatives will reform the renewable energy support mechanisms in order to facilitate a broader portfolio of renewable energy development, including tidal, wave and offshore wind, biomass, Combined Heat and Power, and small scale micro-generation at community or individual level.**
- **Conservatives will reduce Vehicle Excise Duty (VED) on new cars in the existing DVLA bands C to Triple AAA. Tax reductions will range from £10 in Band C to £65**

**in Band AAA. In 2004, it is estimated that over 1.8 million car owners would have benefited from such reductions.**

- **Conservatives will double the existing programme of grants for buying cleaner vehicles and fitting emission-reducing equipment. Taken together with the VED reduction, the policy will triple the value of Government incentives for British motorists to make greener choices. In addition, we will support colour-coded tax discs so that people know the environmental impact of the car that they drive.**
- **Conservatives will seek further reform of the Common Agricultural Policy to allow simpler and more localised interpretation and implementation of the Single Farm Payment.**
- **Conservatives are committed to the phasing out of the use hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs), which currently account for 2 per cent of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions, between 2008 and 2014.**

## EUROPE

### EU CONSTITUTION

- Labour are determined to sign up to the EU Constitution, which would transfer powers from Britain to Brussels. Brussels would win new powers over asylum, immigration, criminal law, industrial relations and energy, making national governments even less accountable.
- The EU Constitution would give the EU a new President, its own foreign minister with his own diplomatic service and the EU would have bigger role in defence. As Hans Martin Bury, the German Europe Minister, has put it, 'the Constitution is the birth certificate for the United States of Europe'.
- There could even be a European Public Prosecutor – described as a potential 'engine of oppression' by the Labour-dominated European Scrutiny Committee - who could initiate prosecutions.

### EURO

- Labour are still committed to scrapping the pound. Joining the euro would mean handing over control of interest rates to an unelected, unaccountable body in Brussels. It is one-size-fits-all interest rates that are doing such damage to economies like Germany's.

### BRINGING POWERS BACK

- Mr Blair promised that: 'we are not giving up the power to set our asylum laws'. All talk. Far from protecting powers over asylum, he has given them away by stealth. As the European Commission's spokesman, Mr Friso Roscam Abbing, has said: 'There is nothing in these protocols that allows a British government to opt back out again, so Britain is bound by them. Say they set a quota of 10,000 a year. Well, the 10,001st case could say to a British judge, "your government is bound by EU rules and is not at liberty not to consider my claim"'.  
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- Labour gave up Britain's opt-out to the job-destroying Social Chapter.
- Labour have given up Britain's veto over asylum and immigration policies affecting our country.
- Labour have failed to lead economic reform in the EU. Even Romano Prodi has described the lack of reform in the EU as a 'big failure'.

### BUREAUCRACY

- According to the CBI, new employment rights, many of which originate in Brussels, cost British business as much as £12.3 billion between 1997 and the end of 2001.
- EU Working Time regulations have a recurring annual cost to the UK of £2.3 billion.
- The European Works Council has a recurring annual cost of £14.5 million and part-time work regulations have a recurring annual cost of £27.4 million.

## **CONSERVATIVE ACTION**

- **On the first day of a Conservative government, we will set a date for a referendum on the EU constitution. We will hold a referendum within six months of winning a general election.**
- **Conservatives will bring back powers from Brussels to Britain where the EU is performing badly. Our priorities are: the return of local and national control over our fisheries, restoring our opt-out from the Social Chapter and spending more of our overseas aid budget from London and less from Brussels. We will also negotiate any necessary opt-outs from directives that stop us carrying out our policy on asylum and immigration.**
- **Conservatives are opposed to the EU Constitution. Countries have Constitutions. Nation states make Treaties with each other.**
- **Conservatives want a flexible Europe. We will not stop other countries going ahead with deeper integration if they do not try to force those countries, like Britain, who do not want deeper integration to go along with them.**
- **Conservatives will slash red tape from the EU. We will end the ‘gold-plating’ of EU directives by UK civil servants that add burdens on business, only back EU laws that have been costed and have a demonstrable benefit. We will fight for greater powers for national parliaments so that if more than half find that an EU law is excessively intrusive or burdensome it would be blocked.**