1.11 Liberal Democrats, Greens and Reform UK: Minor and Emerging Parties: 30-minute Pack

EDEXCEL 9PL0 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Short answer questions may be answered in note form. For levels-marked questions write a well-structured extended response in full sentences and support arguments with accurate political knowledge and named examples. Spend about 30 minutes on this paper.

1 Evaluate the view that minor parties have a significant impact on UK politics despite winning few seats.

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(Total for Question 1 is 30 marks)

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Mark scheme · 1.11 Liberal Democrats, Greens and Reform UK: Minor and Emerging Parties: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

Level 0 No relevant content.	**0**
Level 1 Basic, limited knowledge of minor-party examples with little analysis or evaluation. Responses may be descriptive and lack a clear judgement.	**1-7**
Level 2 Clear knowledge of minor-party cases (e.g. Lib Dems in 2010-2015 coalition, UKIP/Brexit Party pressure, Green influence on climate) with some developed analysis of mechanisms of influence and some evaluation, but argument may be one sided.	**8-15**
Level 3 Detailed, accurate knowledge used to construct a sustained analysis of the extent and limits of minor-party impact, considering multiple mechanisms, examples and counterarguments, and developing a balanced evaluation.	**16-23**
Level 4 Sophisticated, wide ranging knowledge, including precise examples and timing, used to produce a tightly argued evaluation that weighs evidence for and against the claim across domains (electoral, policy, agenda setting), addresses alternative explanations and reaches a well substantiated judgement.	**24-30**

Indicative content:

- Points supporting significant impact: UKIP/Reform UK influenced Conservative policy on Europe culminating in the 2016 EU referendum; the Brexit Party's performance in 2019 further pushed Conservative strategy. The Liberal Democrats held ministerial office in 2010-2015 and secured policy concessions, showing formal power can be exercised even by smaller parties.
- Points supporting significant impact: The Green Party and NGOs increased climate salience leading to net zero commitments by 2019 and influenced local governance and planning policy through council seats and local activism.
- Mechanisms of influence: agenda setting through media visibility, electoral threat causing major-party policy shifts, coalition bargaining providing ministerial influence, local government presence enabling policy experimentation, and pressure through referendums or public campaigns.
- Limits and counterarguments: First Past the Post limits parliamentary representation so seat totals remain low and legislative power is rare; major parties often absorb popular policies, adapting them to their own platforms, which can dilute the minor party's core proposals.
- Limits and counterarguments: Influence may be episodic and issue specific; where the major party finds it electorally costly to adopt a minor-party stance the minor party may have little effect. Institutional factors and international obligations shape policy independently of minor-party pressure.
- Evaluation of relative importance: media visibility and vote share in non-Parliamentary contests can matter more than Commons seats, but formal power in government or a decisive Commons presence is more likely to produce direct policy change.
- Conclusion: A nuanced judgement could argue minor parties have had significant and demonstrable impacts on UK politics in the 2010s, particularly in agenda setting and in shaping major-party choices on issues like Europe and climate, but their ability to determine detailed policy outcomes is constrained by institutional factors and the capacity of major parties to co-opt or adapt proposals.

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