

Chancellor must invest in Green New Deal to protect climate and communities



10 March 2020

- Greens say budget must include the necessary investment in climate action to create thousands of jobs and protect the environment
- Party calls on government to end fuel duty freeze and introduce Frequent Flyer Levy to help fund public transport revolution
- Jonathan Bartley: "This is about making the transition to a low-carbon economy while putting more money into people's pockets."

The Chancellor must use this week's budget [Wednesday 11 March] to announce the rapid and deep investment necessary to tackle the climate crisis and rebuild our communities, the Green Party has said.

As coronavirus threatens an economic slowdown [1] and further damages public services already suffering from chronic under-investment, the Greens have set out two main asks for the budget.

The party is calling on the government to announce:

- An ambitious programme of investment in climate action, to be funded from borrowing, direct credit creation and changes to banking regulation and business incentives.

- The reversal of a decade of cuts that have left our communities vulnerable and our public services threadbare, to be funded through reducing tax exemptions for the wealthy and increasing the rate of environmental taxes.

At the last general election, the Greens pledged to invest £100 billion a year in climate action for the next ten years.

Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley said this is the level of investment needed to protect our climate and invest in our poorer regions.

He said: "This is about making the transition to a low-carbon economy while putting more money into people's pockets.

"We can no longer accept the same old business as usual approach, which just sees the most wealthy prosper while the environment and everybody else pays the price.

"Social and climate crises are all around us. We need to see real leadership from the Chancellor to address these through proper investment in green jobs and decarbonisation."

Green Party finance spokesperson Molly Scott Cato said: "Tax incentives which encourage the burning of more fossil fuels are simply wrong.

"That is why we want to see the return of the fuel duty escalator. We know that freezing fuel duty has cost the government £9 billion a year since 2010, while also damaging the environment. [3]

"The extra revenue should then be invested in developing a reliable and affordable public transport network across the UK.

"At the same time, air travel has to be taxed responsibly. We want to see the introduction of a frequent flyer levy and aviation fuel duty, the proceeds of which need to be invested in improving regional rail links."

Notes

1 <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/coronavirus-uk-economy-bank-of-england-treasury-a9371656.html>

2 The current best estimates of the likely investment needed comes from the think tank [Common Weal](#) who calculate the likely total investment for a Scottish Green New Deal as £170bn. Extrapolating their calculations suggests the cost for the UK as a whole may be £100 billion a year, for a minimum of ten years. £100 billion is less than 5 per cent of UK GDP. The Green Party is committed to invest on the scale the science dictates to save our climate.

At the last general election the [Green Party pledged](#) to invest £100 billion a year for the next decade in climate action as part of the most ambitious

Green New Deal of any political party. We proposed to borrow £91.2 billion a year, to pay for capital expenditure. A further £9 billion a year of operational spending will be met from tax changes, including increasing Corporation Tax to 24%

3 <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2018/oct/03/theresa-may-pledges-to-freeze-fuel-duty-for-ninth-consecutive-year>

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Statement on the imprisonment of Muay in Laos



9 March 2020

The Green Party of England and Wales calls for an immediate and unconditional release of Houayheuag Xayabouly (known as Muay), an environmental activist and social media influencer, whose bravery in defending the environment has now resulted in her imprisonment. She has inspired people in Laos to fight for their rights and has fought against corruption and the influence that foreign businesses have on the lives of Laotians. Muay is currently serving 5 years in prison, separated from her 4 year old daughter and denied bail.

The Green Party stands in solidarity with Muay and other activists who are engaged in the struggle for a just and democratic Laos.

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[Green Party councillors welcome Greta Thunberg to Bristol](#)



5 March 2020

Greta Thunberg has today [Saturday 22 February] announced she will be visiting Bristol on Friday 28 February to join a Youth Strike 4 Climate demo.

Councillor Carla Denyer started the national movement on Climate Emergencies in the UK by proposing the first one in Bristol.

She said: "Greta Thunberg and the millions of climate strikers she inspired have played such a crucial role in forcing climate change up the agenda and ensuring that politicians and other leaders cannot be seen to be ignoring the issue.

"We are delighted that Greta has decided to visit Bristol, particularly as we were the first council in the UK to declare a Climate Emergency following a motion put forward by the Green Party."

The voices of youth climate activists have been particularly powerful in Bristol recently, as Bristol Youth Strike 4 Climate were at the frontline of the campaign against Bristol Airport expansion, alongside Extinction Rebellion, the Green Party and others. Despite the Labour Mayor and the Conservative Metro Mayor backing the airport expansion, the campaign was successful, and North Somerset councillors voted it down by 18 votes to

seven.

Carla continued: “However, we all know that there is so much more to do, which is why it is vital activists such as Greta Thunberg continue holding policy makers to account and we continue to elect Greens who are able to make a difference in councils up and down the country.”

Sandy Hore-Ruthven, the Green Party mayor candidate for Bristol, said: “Greta is calling for our leaders to make decisions for the future, instead of repeating the mistakes of old.

“Building new roads and expanding our airports is thinking from the last century. Instead we should be implementing policies to tackle climate change and make our city a fairer place.

“We have the chance to listen to the next generation and elect Green leadership in the city on 7th May.”

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[Jonathan Bartley responds to the government's plan to tackle coronavirus](#)



3 March 2020

Jonathan Bartley, co-leader of the Green Party, said:

"The government's response to the coronavirus outbreak will require detailed and thorough scrutiny to ensure everything is being done to protect and care for the public.

"This will be a time of colossal change and the government has a duty of care to all those who will be adversely affected, including those who stand to lose out economically for example through increased bills or loss of income.

"As the number of cases escalates, Green councillors will be doing all they can to support their local communities and help them come together to look after the most vulnerable.

"In the Lambeth ward I represent, like Green councillors up and down the country, I will be working with colleagues to ensure the local authority is in a position to keep vital services running, as best they can. Government must also play its part in ensuring that local communities are empowered and supported to do so."

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[Caroline Russell responds to Court of Appeal decision on Heathrow third runway](#)



27 February 2020

Green Party transport spokesperson Caroline Russell, who was at the court for the ruling, said:

“This decision shows business as usual has no place in a climate emergency. Of course we cannot expand aviation in the middle of a climate crisis.

“We are pleased the courts have upheld the will of Parliament on the need to tackle the climate emergency.

“It’s fantastic this is the first time in the world the Paris Agreement has been used as the basis for a ruling.

“We hope it opens the door for more challenges to allow the people to take power back from big business and protect our planet.

“Greens across the country will continue to fight off expansion at airports across the country.”

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