

Green Party responds to NAO report on local government and net zero in England



16 July 2021

- **Councillor Phélim Mac Cafferty: “It is local councillors and communities who are on the frontline of tackling climate change”**

The Green Party leader of Brighton and Hove City Council has responded to the National Audit Office report out today [Friday 16 July] which finds that central government has not provided local authorities with sufficient funds or clarity over their roles in achieving net zero. [1]

Councillor Phélim Mac Cafferty successfully passed a motion at the Local Government Association General Assembly last week calling on the government to ensure that there is “adequate representation” for local authorities at COP26. [2]

Councillor Mac Cafferty said:

“From climate assemblies to retrofitting homes, it is local councillors and communities who are on the frontline of tackling climate change.

“However, as the NAO has highlighted today, the government simply does not recognise the leadership local authorities are showing on the climate emergency. Instead, the government continues to drag its feet by providing insufficient and fragmented funding, while never truly listening to what local communities need as we look to tackle the climate and ecological crises.

“It’s clear that the UK will not get to net zero without strong local leadership driving change from the bottom up, and that is why just last week the Local Government Association recognised the need for local councils to have a seat at the table for COP26 in Glasgow later this year.

“We hope that the government finally hears what those in local government have been saying for too long now, and start to provide both the funds and the tools to make the change that is necessary.”

ENDS

Notes

1

[https://www.nao.org.uk/report/local-government-and-netzero-in-england/](https://www.nao.org.uk/report/local-government-and-net-zero-in-england/)

<https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2021/07/06/greens-lead-the-call-for-local-authorities-to-be-given-representation-at-cop26/>

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Masks must remain mandatory to keep public safe, says Green Party



12 July 2021

- **Peter Cranie: "Wearing masks is about following the science and recognising that this crisis isn't yet over"**

The Green Party has called for the wearing of face masks on public transport and in shops to remain mandatory beyond 19 July.

Reacting to plans to discard the legal enforcement of the protective measure, the Greens have called the government out as wholly irresponsible and divisive.

Caroline Russell, Green Party spokesperson for transport and London Assembly Member, said:

"With Covid case rates rising so worryingly fast, it is reckless of the government to remove the instruction to wear a mask in crowded, enclosed environments like shops and on public transport, where risk of transmission is high. For anyone with compromised immunity, 'Freedom Day' feels like anything but that.

"We've all got used to protecting each other by wearing face coverings when travelling by bus or by train or going into shops and polling [1] shows most people are happy to continue to do this.

"It's wrong to put shop and transport workers, fellow passengers and people shopping at unnecessary risk of catching this terrible virus, when it is so simple to put on a mask."

A petition launched today [2] will give the public the opportunity to demonstrate their support for the continuation of mandatory mask wearing.

Green Party health spokesperson Peter Cranie said:

“Wearing masks is about following the science and recognising that this crisis isn’t yet over.

“The vaccination programme is an incredible feat by the NHS and has managed to reduce the chance of becoming seriously ill from Covid for millions of people. But vaccines alone will not stop Covid from spreading and there are still serious risks associated with the virus, even for those that are double vaccinated. You only have to look at the numbers to see that.

“But mask wearing is also about keeping alive the incredible spirit that’s been shown during the pandemic, that we want to look after one another and that we’re still in this together. Masks have become a symbol of our efforts against Covid – wearing them helps lots of us regulate our behaviour so that we’re not putting ourselves or other people at unnecessary risk.

“That is why the government should be providing clear, science-led guidance on continuing to wear masks on public transport and in public spaces.”

Notes

1

https://yougov.co.uk/topics/health/survey-results/daily/2021/07/05/0275c/1?utm_source=twitter&utm_medium=daily_questions&utm_campaign=question_1

2

<https://actionnetwork.org/petitions/lets-keep-our-masks-on/>

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Green Party welcomes Rossendale councillor from Labour



8 July 2021

- **Sitting Councillor Julie Adshead resigns from Labour and joins the Greens**
- **Becomes the first Green Party councillor on Rossendale Borough Council**
- **Councillor Adshead said: “My role as a councillor has always been about putting the residents of Whitewell Ward first, and that will not change”**

Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale Green Party are pleased to announce that Councillor Julie Adshead has joined the party after resigning from the Labour

Party.

Councillor Adshead has become the first Green Party representative on Rossendale Borough Council after making the move following her disillusionment with the new direction of the Labour Party, which she considers is at odds with prioritising social and environmental justice.

Rossendale resident Councillor Adshead recognises the Greens as the party taking real action on the climate emergency and campaigning for a just transition to a fairer society and prosperous economy. While her party colours have changed, her principles have not. Julie transfers to her true political home with this move.

Councillor Adshead said:

“I am proud to be joining the Green Party to fight for a better deal for our area. During my two years as an elected councillor, I have been disappointed to discover that the Labour Party are not as serious about the climate emergency as they had claimed, particularly given the new leadership.

“I believe that it is vitally important to be true to one’s principles, and so I have made the decision to move to the Green Party as this is where my core values are best represented.

“Recent gains across the country, from Bristol to our neighbours in Burnley, have demonstrated that the Green Party has become a major electoral force and that increasing numbers of people share a commitment to social, economic and environmental justice.

“My role as a councillor has always been about putting the residents of Whitewell Ward first, and that will not change. I will continue to listen to the views and concerns of local residents and work hard for them as my number one priority.”

Councillor Adshead was elected as a councillor in 2019 and was the Labour Party Champion for Climate Change.

The Green Party now has 450 councillors nationally with representation on 143 councils across England and Wales, including Lancashire colleagues consisting of two Lancashire County Councillors, five Burnley Councillors and 11 as part of the Green-led administration on Lancaster City Council.

Green Party deputy leader Amelia Womack said:

“I’m delighted to welcome Julie to her true political home in the Green Party. This year has seen the Greens make huge gains across the country in the May local elections, including in Lancashire, and Julie’s decision to join us shows we are continuing to gain ground.

“Julie has a strong record working for the residents of Whitewell Ward, and I know she will continue to listen to and act as a champion for the local community, delivering real change for those that need it most.”

ENDS

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Green Party condemns shift in Covid policy as negligent



7 July 2021

- **Peter Cranie: "With a 70% rise in cases last week, the government's decision to abandon social distancing measures is grossly irresponsible"**

The Green Party has strongly criticised the negligent and shortsighted policy shift this week resulting from the arrival of Sajid Javid at the Department of Health.

Green Party Public Health spokesperson Peter Cranie said:

"With a 70% rise in cases last week [1], the government's decision to abandon social distancing measures is grossly irresponsible. They are not being driven either by data or by dates but by their own ideology of self-destructive individualism.

"While it is true that the vaccination programme has loosened the link between infection and death, we are dealing with a new virus, which we have already seen has the capacity to mutate. We need to continue to take a cautious approach based on science, rather than libertarian ideology.

"Forty per cent of the population have received no vaccination at all [2] and are still highly vulnerable to this infection. Although in smaller numbers, some children do fall seriously ill and the incidence from Long Covid is still not clear. [3]

"This Darwinian policy is fundamentally discriminatory since we know that certain groups in the population have lower rates of vaccination and so we are condemning them to higher rates of Covid infection, hospitalisation and death. In a strong society we would show solidarity with the most vulnerable rather than throwing them to the wolves.

"The decision to allow individuals to decide for themselves will also put at risk those whose jobs bring them into contact with many other people. We support the call from unions for a legal framework governing safe working,

and the need for greater ventilation and continued mandatory mask-wearing and social distancing in crowded places such as public transport.”

Molly Scott Cato, the party’s finance and economy spokesperson, said:

“This decision to ignore the science and be driven by the Conservative Party’s libertarian wing could end up being totally counter-productive in economic terms. It has been clear throughout the pandemic that if people don’t feel safe they’ll be put off going shopping or to the pub. As cases rise we could see this natural caution kicking in more and more causing another serious blow to our economy.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2021/jul/02/delta-variant-driving-sharp-rise-in-uk-covid-cases-ONS-data-shows>

2

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/health-55274833>

3

<https://inews.co.uk/news/long-covid-is-common-in-children-who-were-hospitalised-by-the-virus-study-finds-1084361>

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Greens lead the call for local authorities to be given representation at COP26



6 July 2021

- LGA to call on Government for “adequate representation” for local authorities at COP26
- Motion at General Assembly proposed by Councillor Phelim MacCafferty,

Green Party leader of Brighton and Hove City Council

- Councillor Phelim Mac Cafferty said: “It’s essential that local councils have a seat at the table in Glasgow for COP26”

The leader of Brighton and Hove Council, Green Party councillor Phelim Mac Cafferty has today (July 6) successfully passed a motion at the Local Government Association General Assembly calling on the Government to ensure that there is “adequate representation” for local authorities at COP26. [1]

The motion was seconded by other Green Party councillors Cllr Siriol Hugh-Jones also of Brighton & Hove City Council, Cllr Julian Dean of Shropshire Council and Cllr Scott Ainslie of Lambeth Council. It was overwhelmingly passed by delegates at the General Assembly with 90 percent of votes in favour and supportive speeches from all parties.

The motion acknowledges the role which local authorities can play in the race to net zero, and the leadership role which they have already played from implementing climate assemblies, green bonds and warmer homes schemes, sourcing electricity demand from renewables, and developing new parks, open spaces and active travel measures.

As well as calling for the Government to give local authorities adequate representation at COP, the motion also called attention to the role local authorities can have in the production of local, sustainable food, and promoting greater participation among local councils on the C100; a network of elected local leaders who pledge to work on climate and clean energy.

Cllr Phelim Mac Cafferty said:

“I am delighted that the Local Government Association recognises the leadership which local councils have shown on the climate emergency while our Government continues to drag its feet.

“From climate assemblies to the deployment of renewables, it’s local councillors and communities who are rolling up their sleeves and getting on with the practical solutions to climate change, carbon reduction and widening inequality.

“We won’t get to net zero without strong local leadership driving change from the bottom up, and it’s essential that local councils have a seat at the table in Glasgow for COP26. Thank you to everyone who voted for our motion – I’m so proud that the LGA is showing the real leadership on climate action which this country is crying out for.”

Green Party councillor Carla Denyer proposed and passed Europe’s first ever climate emergency motion, with similar motions now having since been passed by three quarters of local councils across the UK. Many have now put forward detailed action plans for hitting local net zero targets, some within a more ambitious timeframe than the national government. [2]

Green Party councillor Andrew Cooper has previously proposed a practical means of how local authorities can be more integrated into the formal COP process, by suggesting that regionally and locally determined contributions are formally recognized alongside nationally determined contributions. This would mean that cities and regions across the world would put forward formal plans for carbon reduction as well as nation states. [3]

Green-led Brighton & Hove City Council has produced a plan that sets out how the city can reduce carbon emissions drastically by 2030. The 'Carbon Neutral 2030 plan' proposes measures across all sectors, including energy, housing, transport and through work with local communities. Brighton & Hove's Green Council also delivered a climate assembly and is understood to have facilitated the first ever youth climate assembly, to understand the priorities for future generations in tackling climate change. [4]

ENDS

For further comment or to arrange interview with the proposers of the motion email press@greenparty.org.uk

Notes

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The full text of the motion is as follows:

Motion: Local Government contributions towards national climate action in the year of COP26

Proposer: Cllr Phélim Mac Cafferty, Brighton & Hove City Council

Seconders: Cllr Siriol Hugh-Jones, Brighton & Hove City Council, Cllr Julian Dean, Shropshire Council, Cllr Scott Ainslie, Lambeth Council

Propose that:

In light of:

- The significance of the 'Conference of the Parties' (COP26) UN Conference on Climate Change taking place this year in Glasgow, hosted by the UK; and its aims to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and UN Framework Convention on Climate Change;
- The response of local councils to the issue of sustainable food, given

that food systems account for 1/3 of total greenhouse gas emissions, environmental degradation, food waste and socio-economic and health inequalities; in particular the efforts of councils during the Covid-19 crisis in providing food to local communities, as well as supporting community food growing and assisting food banks;

The Association therefore agrees to:

- Call on national government to ensure the adequate representation of local government at COP26, in order to promote the significant contribution, leadership and efforts of local councils in reducing toxic carbon emissions across the UK, and to champion the innovative and rapid progress being made at a local level to tackle climate change;
- Encourage councils to continue their work to address climate change by:
- promoting further signatories to the Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration. This Declaration confirms the commitment of local and regional authorities to develop sustainable food policy, and calls on national government to put food and farming at the heart of the global response to the climate emergency at COP26; and
- promoting greater participation from local councils to the UK100 network for UK locally elected leaders who have pledged to avoid the worst impacts of climate change, and switch to clean energy as soon as possible.

2

<https://www.climateemergency.uk/>

3

<https://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Documents/3894-leaflet-Cooper-v3-LR.PDF>

4

<https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/climate-change/becoming-carbon-neutral-2030>

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