

Green Party “deeply disappointed” by lost opportunity to put climate action at the heart of Budget



3 March 2021

- **Jonathan Bartley:** “The economy is not somehow separate from the environment but entirely dependent on it”

In response to the Chancellor’s Budget announcement today, Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley said:

“We are deeply disappointed that, in the middle of a climate emergency, the Chancellor has failed to put climate at the heart of his Budget today. It’s no good talking about the climate the week before the Budget and the week afterwards and then sidelining it in the Budget itself. The economy is not somehow separate from the environment but entirely dependent on it.

“We welcome the launch of the first Green Bond, although would call for independent and stringent monitoring to avoid greenwashing. We also welcome action on electric vehicles, although this is no substitute for the modal shift in transport, moving people out of cars and onto fast, efficient, and accessible public transport, as well as supporting active travel.

“The change to the Bank of England mandate so that it favours lending to sustainable sectors does sound promising, but we need to see the small print to see just how successful this will be.

‘The freezing of fuel duty is another disappointment, but we would have gone much further than just returning to the annual escalator by imposing a high and rising carbon tax on all fossil fuels. A carbon tax is the fastest and most efficient way to make the biggest polluting companies pay for the carbon they emit, signalling to markets that we are serious about rapid progress towards net zero.

“The Chancellor had an opportunity in the year the UK hosts the UN climate talks to show global leadership. He has utterly failed to do that.”

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Green Party urges Chancellor to make polluters pay in Spring Budget



1 March 2021

- **Jonathan Bartley: “The Chancellor has an opportunity this week to show how seriously the UK government takes its position as chair of COP26”**

The Green Party has urged the Chancellor to use this week’s Spring Budget to show the level of ambition required as chair of COP26 and make sure the biggest polluters pay for the carbon they emit at great cost to us all.

Ahead of Rishi Sunak’s Budget announcement on Wednesday (3 March), the Greens have put forward their proposals to shift the economy towards more urgent climate action while also ensuring support is provided to those who are suffering the most during the Covid crisis. [1]

Central to these plans is an upstream carbon tax which would see the biggest polluters pay the most for CO2 emissions at source, with the money raised paid out to those in society who need it most.

Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley said:

“We know the climate emergency is here and we know we need to drive down emissions as quickly as possible if we are to have any hope of avoiding catastrophic climate change.

“The Chancellor has an opportunity this week to show how seriously the UK government takes its position as chair of COP26 and to start pulling some powerful economic levers to create a shift away from fossil fuels and towards a cleaner, healthier future for us all.

“A carbon tax is the fastest and most efficient way to put a high and rising price on carbon, signalling to markets that we are serious about rapid progress towards net zero.

“We need a huge shift away from business as usual and towards the kinds of policies that will improve life for everybody, such as investing in a huge retrofit programme to make sure everybody has a warm home and investing in cheap and accessible public transport to help dramatically reduce car miles.”

The Green Party’s proposals for the Spring Budget includes:

- A carbon tax of £100 per tonne of carbon dioxide rising to £500 by 2030 on fossil fuel companies, applied to all emissions, with some of the tax yield used to compensate those on lower incomes
- Reverse the VAT incentive on construction away from new build and

towards renovation, with a reduced 5% rate of VAT on retrofit and low-energy products [2]

- A Universal Basic Income, without conditions, to protect people against ongoing turbulence from Covid
- Make the £20 Universal Credit uplift permanent as a first step on the path towards a full review of the resilience of our welfare system, whose weakness – especially on sick pay – was exposed during the crisis
- Transfer the £27bn destined for unnecessary and polluting road-building towards investment in cheap and accessible public transport and active travel options
- Extend the business rate holiday and VAT exemption for as long as is necessary for the retail, hospitality and leisure sectors with the UK government providing compensation to local authorities for loss of income

Green Party finance spokesperson Molly Scott Cato said:

“We are calling on the Chancellor to commit to a carbon tax on the scale required to live up to the promises of global climate leadership made by the Prime Minister. This would place him in a strong position to build a coalition for such a policy to be adopted on a global basis at COP26 later this year.

“The rhetoric on climate has strengthened and now is the time for policies to follow suit. Joe Biden’s \$2 trillion climate action plan makes the £3 billion of new money committed by this government look laughable. We need the Chancellor to invest in a Green Recovery on the scale required both to tackle the climate emergency and provide new jobs and training for those who face unemployment as a result of Covid.”

ENDS

Notes

1

The Green Party’s full Spring Budget proposal is available [here](#)

2

<https://petition.parliament.uk/petitions/573207&sa=D&source=editors&ust=1614617028576000&usg=A0vVaw1zWousKEMeNJY4aPB0ig8K>

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Greens criticise Labour for putting party interest above global disarmament



26 February 2021

The Green Party has criticised Labour's policy of "non-negotiable" support for nuclear weapons, which comes soon after a new global disarmament process.

Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley said:

"We deeply regret Labour's change of stance over nuclear weapons that do nothing to enhance our security and which no defence minister would ever be able to use.

"The language of making this policy 'non-negotiable' is highly provocative, coming shortly after a global process for multilateral, negotiated disarmament was agreed at the United Nations. It is precisely through negotiation that reductions in global nuclear weapons stockpiles have been achieved.

"Labour's decision to wrap itself in the flag and act tough on nuclear weapons is cynically designed to win back voters who deserted the party in 2019. It does nothing to address the UK's strategic security needs or to advance global disarmament."

Bartley wrote to Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab in October 2020, asking that he sign the UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons that came into effect on 22 January.

He continued:

"The Green Party is fully committed to the ICAN process and would welcome a public debate on this process of multilateral disarmament in the UK, as one of the few nuclear-armed states that could really advance the process of removing these immoral and dangerous weapons from our world.

"We would also support an engaged public debate on the future of NATO, which is a strategic alliance forged during the Cold War that is outdated in a world where threats to our safety are multi-polar. Both these issues should be debated by the public as part of the so-called integrated defence review that the government is undertaking."

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Notes

Labour's Shadow Defence Minister is expected to signal a change of policy on Trident and NATO during a speech later today:

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2021/feb/25/labour-to-state-non-negotiable-support-for-uks-nuclear-weapons>

2

The UN Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons came into force on 22nd January.

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[Green plans to invest more than £27 million into climate action in Brighton & Hove](#)



25 February 2021

The Green-led council in Brighton and Hove has put forward plans to commit to investing more than £27 million into climate action in the city to help improve the lives of residents and tackle climate change. [1]

In the midst of the coronavirus pandemic and despite swingeing government cuts, which have seen Brighton and Hove City Council (BHCC) lose £100 million over ten years of Conservative austerity, Brighton and Hove Green Party councillors have put forward their plans for a Green recovery in the city which will be decided at the authority's budget meeting on Thursday [25 February].

The plans include:

- £5.2m on the Brighton & Hove Warmer Homes Investment Fund which will make grants available to all residents in the city particularly low-income households. This will allow residents to update the insulation and heating systems in their homes, lowering both their fuel bills and their carbon footprint.
- A total of £7m on Sustainability and Carbon Reduction Investment Funds, which will provide funding to departments for projects that meet council sustainability priorities
- £1.7m combined to invest in parks and open spaces, creating new school

streets, low traffic neighbourhoods and the expansion of the Brighton BikeShare scheme.

Green Party Councillor Phelim Mac Cafferty, leader of Brighton and Hove City Council, said:

“One year into the coronavirus pandemic, and with the climate crisis looming ever larger, it has become increasingly clear that it is down to local councils and communities to step up and deliver the kind of support and transformational change that the government is simply not prepared to do.

“Despite years of budget cuts we have prepared a budget which will not only keep local services on their feet and get people through this immediate health crisis, it will actually help improve all of our lives in ways that will tackle the spiralling climate emergency.

“This budget offers a Green recovery for Brighton and Hove, offering protection for the most vulnerable in the city, creating jobs and helping to build a cleaner, healthier and Greener future for us all.”

The budget proposal would also see the creation of a £4m reserve fund to kickstart a huge retrofitting scheme for all council homes in the city by 2030.

The investment plans put forward would be paid for by a rise in council tax, with those on low incomes protected from any increase in payments, a responsible and necessary use of the council’s reserves and sustainable borrowing at the current historic low rates.

Green Party Councillor David Gibson, joint finance lead on BHCC, said:

“Our priority is for a fair budget; where charges go up, we increase support for people struggling with council tax; and exempt low-income households from Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) increases.

“It’s a budget for recovery – instead of slashing services and jobs in a recession, we have used a modest amount of reserves to cover some of the extra costs of the pandemic, leaving enough resources to invest in public services and recovery right now, when it is certainly most needed. Crucially, as we head towards recovery, these reserves are repaid.

“This budget also fights to protect residents from another huge emergency: our climate crisis. We’ve worked to create green jobs, promote community wealth, and aid recovery in public projects. Projects such as building much needed additional council homes, warmer homes, easier to heat and climate friendly, will make a huge difference.

“Planting trees, investing in sustainable, active travel options and supporting our cultural and tourism recovery will also be key to getting our city back on its feet, able to rise to future challenges and thrive again.”

ENDS

Notes

1

Here is a full breakdown of climate action investment in Brighton and Hove City Council's budget:

- Solar panels for corporate buildings – £500,000
- Sustainability and Carbon Reduction Investment Fund (SCRIF) – £3.1m
- Sustainability and Carbon Reduction Investment Fund – Transport – £3.9m
- Brighton Bikeshare Replacement Programme – £467,000
- Pocket Parks – Parks and Open Spaces – £350,000
- School Streets – Transport – £50,000
- Low Traffic Neighbourhoods – Transport – £300,000
- Brighton & Hove Warmer Homes Investment Fund – £5.2m
- Climate Assembly Actions – £1.3m
- Domestic and communal heating improvements in council houses – £2.24m
- Funding over two years to replace inefficient heating systems across all council housing stock and to consider opportunities to improve the energy rating and identify projects that will help to contribute to the target of being carbon neutral by 2030 – £4.8m
- Installation of a district heating network – £1.1m
- Home energy efficiency, insulation improvements and renewables – £300,000
- New Solar PV panels across council housing stock – £1.750m

Total – £27.057 million

- In addition to this investment, the council would put aside an extra £4m into reserves to go towards a retrofit scheme for all council houses. The authority aims to have a fully-costed report by November which will set out how the council's housing stock can be retrofitted over the next nine years and how much it will cost. In the meantime, consultation work will begin with residents.

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[Greens demand further protections for schools to avoid another lockdown](#)



22 February 2021

- **The call comes as Boris Johnson is set to address the nation this evening to announce a lift in lockdown restrictions from March**

The Green Party is urging the government to introduce additional measures to protect schools which could save lives and avoid another lockdown in the coming months.

The Green Party Education Spokesperson Vix Lowthion said:

“It is vital to stop transmission in schools by introducing effective protections to make them safer – such as masks in classrooms, adequate ventilation, a rota system and utilising outdoor and community spaces to allow social distancing as part of a phased return to school.

“These protections are commonplace in European nations, and a phased return is what is happening in Scotland and Wales. This government’s belief in English exceptionalism is incredibly dangerous.

“If new, additional protections are not introduced then we could face exactly the same issues as we did in December, and a fourth lockdown in the coming months.”

Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley added:

“It is essential that Boris Johnson carefully follows the science as the nation comes out of our third lockdown. In the past the government has lifted restrictions too quickly, causing thousands of people to tragically lose their lives, many more than should have been the case.

“The chancellor has a chance at the upcoming March budget to provide financial security for all those struggling to deal with the economic hardships the pandemic has brought. It is vital he acts with the interests of the most vulnerable at the centre of his attention.”

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