

Green Party sets out five tests for government's 10 point climate change plan



17 November 2020

Ahead of the expected publication of the government's long promised ten point plan on the environment, the Green Party sets out five tests for Boris Johnson to meet if the plans are to be welcomed as a serious response to the climate emergency.

Green Party co leader Jonathan Bartley said: "The promise of this ten-point plan represents an important change of emphasis by the government, but years of delay and blocking action means the government is still not on course to meet even its inadequate commitments. We are looking to the Prime Minister to demonstrate that he has grasped the urgency of tackling the climate emergency.

"Boris Johnson can't just say a few warm words on climate to earn himself a cuddly new image after his year of chaos. Over the last nine months we have seen what failure to prepare in the face of an emergency means for the people of the UK and this cannot be allowed to happen when it comes to tackling the climate crisis also.

"That is why, today, I am setting out five principles to follow to make this ten point plan worth the paper it's printed on."

The Green Party's five tests are as follows:

Transform the whole economy

Too often, climate policies from government focus almost exclusively on energy. We need a fundamental reset of the whole economy, decarbonising every sector, ditching high carbon infrastructure projects such as road building and investing instead in projects including nature conservation public transport and walking and cycling infrastructure. The ten point plan must set out how we go net zero across every single sector, including housing, transport and agriculture, without simply relying on the development of new technologies that do not yet exist.

Only provide subsidies for new and emerging clean energy technologies

Subsidising and extracting fossil fuels across the United Kingdom pours petrol on the fire of the climate emergency. The ten point plan must involve a clear transition towards leaving all fossil fuels in the ground and disentangling all of our institutions from oil, gas and coal. Subsidies should solely be used to develop new clean energy, rather than dirty and dangerous sources, including new nuclear, which need to be phased out. The

application of such a test would be likely to result in 100% renewable energy.

UK must carry its own net-zero burden

The UK must reach net-zero by its own effort, not by offloading the heavy lifting onto other countries. This means no purchasing of carbon offsets from countries that have made better progress on renewable energy or relying on imported dirty electricity. With our incredible renewable resources we should aim to be an exporter of clean energy.

Prosperity for all

We can't take action on climate without lifting everybody up. The ten point plan must have a comprehensive Green New Deal and a credible strategy for winding down polluting, outdated sectors, protecting all livelihoods with a basic income and creating millions of good, well-paid Green jobs.

Prioritise the local

Across the world, leadership on moving to net zero has come from local authorities and regional governments. The changes that we need to see must be rapid and have to come from the bottom up. In the UK we have seen this with local authority climate emergency plans. We need government to share the power to tackle climate change with local government and to provide the money and resources for them to take action to deliver on those plans.

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Recycling will decline if waste burners get go ahead, warn Greens



16 November 2020

Green Party peer Jenny Jones has warned of a doubling of emissions from incineration unless there is an immediate moratorium on new Energy from Waste plants.

As well as signing a joint letter to the Prime Minister along with other politicians, campaigners and NGOs, she has also written to the Committee on

Climate Change saying that the building of new incinerators contradicts the aim of achieving net zero emissions by 2050.

Baroness Jones, said:

“We already burn more waste than we recycle and the amount we incinerate will continue to increase if the government does not immediately put a ban on further energy from waste plant being constructed.

“New figures show that a doubling of incinerator capacity is in the planning pipeline [1] and yet the government maintains that the decision is down to individual local authorities. As soon as an incinerator is built then recycling and reuse goes into reverse as local authorities meet their contractual obligations to provide fuel for these polluting monsters.

“The government target of recycling 65% of domestic waste by 2035 is a non-starter, unless we start closing down incinerators over the next few years. That is the experience of France, which has the biggest reliance on Energy from Waste and one of the poorest recycling rates in Europe. Policy makers in Scandinavia have also realised that their reliance on energy from waste is stopping them from reaching their climate change goals, with Denmark announcing a plan for scaling back on its use of incinerators.

“The CCC has previously suggested that carbon capture and storage as a partial solution, but that mitigates emissions rather than dealing with them completely and who exactly is going to pay for this big investment in clean up technologies and when does it start?

“I’ve always accepted the argument that energy from waste is a better way of dealing with residual waste than landfill, but a recent report by Zero Waste Scotland showed that even that advantage is marginal and could disappear with a slight increase in the proportion of plastic in the waste stream. [2]

“We need to stop building incinerators and start focusing on reducing waste, along with repair, reuse and recycling. Creating a circular economy also means creating tens of thousands of new jobs and that is the kind of build back better boost we could all benefit from. “

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://members.parliament.uk/member/4297/writtenquestions?page=1#expand-1241473>

2

<https://www.zerowastescotland.org.uk/sites/default/files/ZWS%20%282020%29%20CC%20impacts%20of%20incineration%20SUMMARY%20REPORT%20FINAL.pdf>

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Government inquiry into democracy must not be allowed to be a “wolf in sheep’s clothing”, warn Greens



16 November 2020

The Green Party has warned a government inquiry into the UK’s democratic process must commit to full transparency and public involvement.

The Greens have made a submission to the inquiry into the government’s Constitution, Democracy and Rights Commission [1], calling for it to also look into how power is acquired, maintained, and exercised.

Green Party peer Natalie Bennett said:

“It’s clear that many people lost faith in our democratic process long ago. They see politics as something that is done to them, rather than by or even for them.

“However, as we continue to tackle the pandemic and the climate crisis it is more important than ever that people trust and participate in the decisions that affect their lives locally, nationally and globally, rather than viewing politics as a distant and potentially malignant force.

“So we agree this commission is needed to restore trust and build modern, functional, democratic systems. However, it appears that the government’s intention is that this inquiry be a wolf in sheep’s clothing, whose real objective is to continue the Tory attacks on democracy and human rights.

“Democracy belongs to everybody and should not be under the influence of just one party. That is why we are calling for a People’s Constitutional Convention, in the form of a citizens’ assembly, to be established alongside the Commission.

“We, the people, should decide how power is shared. And so the first priority for this inquiry is to commit to transparency. Deciding on the future of our democracy is a concern for all of us, not something condemned to an inquiry carried out by a committee almost nobody has heard of.”

ENDS

Notes

1

https://www.greenparty.org.uk/assets/files/Communications/PCAC_consultation_Nov2020.pdf

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Green Party welcomes proposal to increase capital gains tax



12 November 2020

The Green Party has welcomed a report from the Office of Tax Simplification which suggested an increase in capital gains tax could raise £14bn. [1]

Green Party finance spokesperson Molly Scott Cato said:

“We agree with the Office of Tax Simplification that the current tax system encourages people to exploit tax loopholes to minimize their liabilities. We would support the Chancellor in reversing the cuts to capital gains tax begun under Gordon Brown.

“Our policy of a Unified Income Tax goes a step further, consolidating all taxes on personal income into a single tax, closing many loopholes, and making avoidance and evasion more difficult. It would ensure that people pay the same rate of tax on income from assets as on income from employment.”

Professor Scott Cato, who worked extensively on tax policy during her time in the European Parliament, added:

“While the yields from such a change would be relatively modest, it would be a clear indication that the costs of the pandemic will be shared fairly.”

Deputy Leader Amelia Womack said:

“The pandemic has revealed the depth of inequality in society and it is vital that the costs of this crisis are borne by those with the widest shoulders, unlike after the financial crisis when the rich gained in wealth while the poor became poorer.

“As well as increasing capital gains tax we need to look towards those who have seen windfall profits during the pandemic and introduce windfall taxes on tech companies and on their owners and shareholders.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ots-capital-gains-tax-review-simplifying-by-design>

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[Greens call for 2021 exams to be replaced by classroom-based assessments](#)



12 November 2020

Next year's exams in England must be replaced with classroom-based assessments that will allow schools to determine grades, the Green Party has said.

Following the fiasco this summer which saw an algorithm used to determine grades [1], and as evidence emerges of regional inequalities in the impact of coronavirus [2], the Greens education spokesperson has urged the government to set out a clear plan for next year's GCSEs, A Levels and SATs.

Lowthion, a secondary school teacher on the Isle of Wight, said:

“The regional inequalities across England that we have seen during the pandemic means that it would be completely unfair if exams were to go ahead as usual in 2021.

“At the same time, students should not be limited to teacher assessed grades. This would be unfair on both staff and pupils and, as we saw this summer, can be badly affected by an algorithm based on prior attainment rather than current ability.

“Exams in 2021 cannot be business as usual. They must be replaced by classroom-based assessments, which are marked externally over the months until July. Schools must then be trusted to use these assessments to determine the student’s overall grade.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2020/08/19/greens-call-for-overhaul-of-education-system-after-results-fiasco/>

2

<https://www.thenhsa.co.uk/app/uploads/2020/11/NP-COVID-REPORT-EMBARGOED.pdf>

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