

# [Greens condemn latest delay to Environment Bill](#)



26 January 2021

The Green Party has condemned the government's decision to delay the Environment Bill for the third time today. [1]

MPs will debate amendments to the Bill in the House of Commons this afternoon, but the government has said further discussions will not go ahead until the next Parliamentary session.

Sian Berry, Green Party co-leader and Mayor of London candidate, said:

“This government says it will prioritise the environment, but once again when it comes to taking action they delay and disappoint. Boris Johnson has spoken about building back better, yet his government cannot even be bothered to make sure this crucial piece of legislation goes ahead in a timely manner.

“As it stands, the Bill is too weak in a number of areas, but that is why it is absolutely vital that parliamentarians, including the Green Party's Caroline Lucas, are able to table amendments and debate it urgently.

“This Bill provides an opportunity for the government to enshrine into law policy that we desperately need to tackle the climate and nature emergencies. The environment can't wait and we need to see the government back up its rhetoric with legislation”

ENDS

## **Notes**

**1**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-55799191>

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# Greens warn UK is “paying the price” for government failure on floods



21 January 2021

- **Amelia Womack: “People are paying the price for decades of tokenistic action when it comes to flood risk management”**

The Green Party has accused the government of chronic failure over its inadequate response to flooding.

As Storm Christoph caused devastation in parts of England and Wales [1], Green Party Deputy Leader Amelia Womack has said the UK and Welsh governments must immediately implement a long-term plan to improve natural flood defences and reassess planning regulations which still allow for new buildings on flood plains.

Womack said:

“Every year, flooding across the UK impacts families and businesses. To add to this devastation, this year it comes 10 months into a global pandemic putting added strain on individuals and communities.

“Climate change increases our likelihood of extreme and damaging weather across the country. Yet, the government’s announcements of further funding for flood defences are more often than not too little, too late and lack a practical plan for the future.

“Concrete flood defences after an event won’t solve the impact the climate and ecological emergency is having on our flood risk. We need a long-term vision to reassess how we work with the land by improving natural flood defences, and working with our environment which has been proven to be far more effective.

“Given this happens every year we need to adapt our planning system to the climate changed world and recognise that we can no longer build homes and commercial premises on floodplains.

“People are paying the price for decades of tokenistic action when it comes to flood risk management. We need the UK government to start showing true global leadership by introducing the policies that will reduce our carbon emissions as soon as possible and restore our ecosystems. Taking real climate action will not only help reduce the impact of climate change, but will also help us create thousands of good quality jobs in our communities.”

Greater Manchester is one of the areas hit hardest by the latest storm.

Melanie Horrocks, Green Party candidate for Mayor of Greater Manchester, said:

“My thoughts are with everyone affected by these floods, which have come at the worst possible time. A huge thanks to the staff of local councils, dealing with yet another front line emergency. Councils have been stretched more than ever over the past year, and now have to deal with this at the same time. It makes it all the more important that the government provides more support for councils, for businesses affected, and for those who will end up self-isolating as a result.

“The planning system makes it far too easy for flooding risks to be increased. This week should be a wake-up call for those wanting to build on vast swathes of the green belt across Greater Manchester. All public funds need to be divested away from fossil fuels investments, and the only responsible approach for the future of Greater Manchester is one which includes reduced airport use, not expansion.

“Yet again, records are being broken by the consequences of extreme weather. This is the new normal. Politicians at every level need to step up, urgently, to stop climate change spiralling beyond anything we can influence.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-55743246>

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## [Greens condemn government failure to ensure free movement for musicians after Brexit](#)



20 January 2021

- **Amelia Womack backs letter from leading musicians and deplores loss of soft power and cultural influence**

The Green Party has backed a letter from leading musicians calling on the government to ensure musicians' continued ability to travel paperwork-free while they tour the EU in the post-Brexit era.

The open letter, signed by 110 musical artists including Radiohead and Ed Sheeran and addressed to the Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden, would ensure touring musicians would not have to go through the costly and bureaucratic process of gaining visas for each country they travelled through. [1]

Green Party deputy leader Amelia Womack said:

“The music industry is one of many that has been utterly failed by this government that has broken its promise to ensure they could move freely after Brexit..

“Not only is the music industry an essential sector of our economy, it is also a vital part of our cultural standing in the world and an important part of our soft power that is now more important than ever. Radiohead and Ed Sheeran have done more to enhance the reputation of Global Britain than a whole generation of politicians.”

The Green Party supports the call from the Musicians’ Union (MU) for a “musicians’ passport” that would cover all 27 EU members’ states, removing the need for multiple permits, and that would also cover road crew and technicians.

Womack said:

“The long, bureaucratic process musicians currently have to face, including domestic immigration checks and the possibility of having to pay for multiple visas across the continent, means that many will simply have to cease touring.

“This negotiating failure is another symptom of the Conservative government’s xenophobic blind-spot when it comes to freedom of movement. Its refusal to see this as a reciprocal right and one that is vital to our economy is hitting musicians as it has already hit lawyers, doctors, academics and the many others who used to travel freely across a labour-market of half a billion people.”

ENDS

**Notes**

**1**

<https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/more-than-100-music-stars-attack-brex-it-deal-687znfk66>

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# Green Party welcomes Conservative rebels' support for making trade conditional on human rights



18 January 2021

- **Jonathan Bartley underlines universal nature of human rights**

The Green Party has welcomed statements from some 30 Conservative MPs that they will block a post-Brexit trade deal with China tomorrow [Tuesday 19 January] because of that country's attacks on the Uyghur community [1]

But Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley has warned that human rights must be universal, and therefore cannot be applied to just one country.

Bartley said:

"While we welcome Iain Duncan Smith's conversion to linking human rights with trade policy it is inconsistent and smacks of opportunism.

"It is a mere five years since George Osborne was rolling out the red carpet for President Xi, who was already trampling on the rights and freedoms of both Uyghurs and Tibetans. This genocide is not new and it is not confined to China."

Bartley agreed that trade agreements should be made conditional on the human rights records of the countries concerned but noted that human rights are universal and so such a stance cannot be used to isolate just one country.

He said:

"You cannot pick and choose whose rights you defend. If human rights are not universal then they are meaningless.

"Duncan Smith and other leading Tories need to adopt a similar stance towards those countries where clear breaches of human rights are taking place, such as Brazil, where Bolsonaro is actively encouraging both genocide and ecocide in the Amazon, and Saudi Arabia, where the government has ignored a high-court ruling that its export of arms used to kill civilians in Yemen are illegal. [2]

"It is the necessity of upholding human rights and environmental standards in global trade that lies behind the UN's binding treaty. Global Greens have supported this process for some time and we invite the British Conservatives to do the same to indicate that Global Britain will be a beacon for human rights across the world." [3]

ENDS

## Notes

1

FT [reports](#) some 30 Tory MPs are seeking to block a trade deal with China during the debate on the Trade Bill on Tuesday.

2

Ministry of Defence [log](#) of human rights violations in Yemen indicates at least 500 have taken place since 2015.

3

[RTE has reported](#) that the “UN efforts to develop a business and human rights treaty have been ongoing since 2014. These have been hampered by the opposition of key powerful states, often the home states of the largest multinational firms”

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## [Greens challenge “grossly unfair” decision on early years](#)



15 January 2021

- **Last-minute guidance from Government on Early Years means providers who sought to prioritise health will be punished by Government**

Greens have today spoken out regarding a last-minute change in guidance, which means that early years providers seeking to protect staff and children from Covid-19 transmission will be penalised by Government.

The amount of free-places funding given to early years providers is decided next week, as providers will be asked to count the number of children in attendance during the week of the census – a data counting measure that government are pursuing despite the impact of the national pandemic.

Prior to guidance issued on Thursday 14<sup>th</sup> January, providers were able to claim for pupils registered at a nursery and on roll under ‘exceptional

circumstances'. Following this new guidance, issued at short notice, nurseries who have limited expected attendance or who have supported staff concerned about the pandemic, will not be able to claim funding for children. Brighton and Hove City Council will experience a further gap in funding as a result of the earlier committee decision to move council-run nurseries to close to all but vulnerable children and the children of key workers. [2]

This new guidance from government comes despite the increasing case numbers in England, and rising infection rates across all age groups in Brighton & Hove. Latest Covid-19 data has confirmed that infection rates in the city are now higher than the rate for England, more than doubling since the national lockdown began on 26th December. Rising infection rates locally have also provoked concern for the NHS, with recent news reports stating that all critical care beds in Brighton and Hove's NHS trust are full. [3]

Greens say the decision to make funding decisions based on attendance in the midst of the pandemic is "grossly unfair" and will be writing to the Department for Education to challenge the decision. Councils in areas where nurseries are open to all have also begun to demand a change in position from government ministers, as it is likely that new rules mean both private and council-run nursery providers will have limited attendance of both staff and children, and experience a funding shortfall.[4]

This also comes in the same week councillors were told that the amount of funding given to early years providers in Brighton and Hove remains lower than the national average.[5]

Caroline Lucas, MP for Brighton Pavilion said:

"It beggars belief that, in the middle of a pandemic crisis, the Government would deliberately change its guidance in such a way as to increase the risk of infection for children and staff. Ministers are wilfully putting Councils in an impossible situation: if nursery providers remain closed, collectively they stand to lose millions of pounds; if they're forced to open, they put staff and children at risk. To hold nursery providers and young children to ransom in this way is despicable and – following the free school meals debacle – marks a new low in the Government's cruel and callous treatment of our young people."

Cllr Hannah Clare, Chair of the Children, Young People and Skills Committee said:

"In the middle of a pandemic, where the number of cases are higher than ever – the choice from Government is that unless we re-open our council-run nurseries, we will lose out.

"Asking councils to count the attendance and demand that we progress with this census during a national lockdown and some of the worst rates of this virus we have ever seen locally is grossly unfair. Providers are being forced by Government to make decisions based on finances – not on the health and wellbeing of our community.

“We will continue to challenge this decision and remain clear – that the health of our community is the priority of this council.”

## NOTES

1

Guidance issued 14 January 2021

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Ytd1eEIbgnIGyZP8dwdDk3Q8I0MAFmFK/view?usp=drivesdk>

2

<https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/news/2021/changes-nursery-and-early-years-provision-7-january>

3

[Covid-19 key statistics for Brighton & Hove \(brighton-hove.gov.uk\)](#)

and

<https://www.brightonandhovenews.org/2021/01/14/its-critical-brighton-hospital-full-after-surge-in-coronavirus-cases/>

4

<https://kccmediahub.net/council-urges-government-to-review-nursery-funding-during-lockdown745>

5

<https://present.brighton-hove.gov.uk/documents/s161397/Families%20Children%20and%20Learning%20Fees%20and%20Charges%20202122.pdf>

***Last-minute guidance from Government on Early Years means providers who sought to prioritise health will be punished by Government***

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