

# Government's cycling plans will need more funding to see real change – Caroline Russell



28 July 2020

The government has announced plans to encourage cycling and walking to be funded by a previously announced £2 billion over five years. [1]

Green Party transport spokesperson Caroline Russell said:

“It’s great to see the new design guidance, proposed Highway Code updates and such enthusiastic government support for protected bike lanes and low traffic neighbourhoods.

“These transformative measures will properly enable people to make local trips safely on foot and by bike. But if we are going to see a measurable change in the way people get around, the government needs to find a lot more than £2 billion.”

ENDS

## **Notes**

1

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-kickstarts-2bn-cycling-and-walking-revolution>

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# Greens in administration in Brighton and Hove City Council following Labour resignations



24 July 2020

- **Green Party now in administration in 18 councils across the country**
- **Green group has pledged to focus on helping city through coronavirus crisis**
- **Councillor Phélim Mac Cafferty: “Greens are united in our determination to see the city through our many current challenges and will work with all parties in order to get this achieved”**

The Green Party is now running Brighton and Hove City Council (BHCC) as a minority administration after two Labour resignations tipped the balance of power.[1]

The Greens were left the largest party on the council with 19 councillors after Labour were left with 18 councillors following the resignations.

A motion to transfer power to the Greens was passed at a full council meeting yesterday [Thursday 23 July]. It means the Green Party is now in administration in 18 councils across the country – the highest number in its history.

Councillor Phélim Mac Cafferty has now become the council leader, while Councillor Hannah Clare and Councillor Sue Shanks are deputy leaders.

Caroline Lucas, Green MP for Brighton Pavilion, said:

“This is a critical time for our city which faces a multitude of challenges, among them the impact of Covid-19 on our communities and economy, the desperation of the homeless and the accelerating climate and nature crisis.

“I know Phélim Mac Cafferty and his colleagues will do everything they can to address these and other challenges, and will work tirelessly and cross-party for the good of our amazing city.

“I will continue to press ministers to make good on their promises from the spring to ‘do whatever is necessary to support councils in their response to coronavirus’. The reality is that BHCC is facing a funding shortfall of as much as £39 million because of the impact of the virus, and the Government’s commitment of £500 million shared across more than 360 councils in England and Wales isn’t going to do much to close the gap.”

Green peer Jenny Jones, Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb, said:

“I’m delighted that in my home town the Greens have a chance to benefit every community and implement measures that will make a safe and secure future for all.

“This is clearly a difficult time for everybody in Brighton and Hove, but let’s hope the whole council pulls together to build back better and ensure we have a green recovery from coronavirus.

“However, with the Greens in control we can be confident that the needs and the well-being of the local community will always be put first during this crisis.”

Councillor Mac Cafferty said:

"The Greens are proud to be leading Brighton and Hove City Council and we will do everything in our power to ensure our city and its residents are supported at a time of crisis.

"Now more than ever the people of Brighton and Hove deserve a green recovery from the Covid-19 crisis and we stand fully behind initiatives such as the mass insulation of homes, that will create jobs, reduce emissions and warm peoples' homes.

"We have come into administration when the council's finances are the worst we have ever known them and around the country the outlook for local government has never been bleaker with several councils now on the verge of bankruptcy.

"Residents at this time expect all of us to play our part for the city and we will work cross party where possible when it is in our city's best interests to do so. We are united in our determination to see the city through our many current challenges and will work with all parties in order to get this achieved."

Further details of the group's plans will be unveiled in the coming weeks.

ENDS

#### Notes

1

A motion to transfer power to the Greens was passed at a full council meeting on Thursday 23 July

<https://new.brighton-hove.gov.uk/news/2020/update-green-administration-brighton-hove-city-council>

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**Greens Party motion to demand basic income pilot in Norwich is passed**

# unanimously

21 July 2020

Norwich City Council has tonight unanimously passed a Green Party motion calling on the government to trial a fully evaluated basic income in the city in response to the economic shock of the coronavirus crisis.[1]

Leaders of all political parties on Norwich City Council will now write to the Good Economy Commission for Norwich, the secretary of state for Work and Pensions, the Chancellor, the Prime Minister, and all opposition party leaders to ask for a UBI trial in the city of Norwich after passing the motion this evening.

It would mean each citizen in Norwich would receive a monthly income to cover the basic costs of living, regardless of employment status, wealth, or marital status.

This is the first such council motion calling for a trial specifically as response to coronavirus, citing the threat of many Norwich citizens being plunged into poverty, and the shortcomings of Universal Credit.

The last year has seen the number of people claiming the Universal Credit benefit in Norwich more than double, from just over 3,000 in March 2019 to more than 7,200 in March 2020. [2]

Responding to the news the motion had passed, Green Party peer Natalie Bennett said:

“The economic crisis is only just getting started, but the Government is already turning its back on millions of people. The furlough scheme is winding down, and job losses have started gushing like a burst pipe, with hundreds of livelihoods down the drain every single day.

“We need a universal basic income to ensure that nobody is left high and dry. By ensuring that every single one of us has enough to meet our basic needs, we have a better chance of weathering this storm together.

“The Government should agree to this trial in Norwich so they can see for themselves how effective it will be.”

The council has called for the evaluation of such a trial to look beyond how many people are able to take up paid work as a result, but also to look at the impact on communities, and people’s attitudes towards each other, and their environment.

Norwich Green Party councillor Jamie Osborn said: “I’m delighted that Norwich councillors have today unanimously supported the Green Party proposal for a Universal Basic Income. Even before lockdown I was appalled by the number of people in my ward who were humiliated and excluded by our current benefits

system, and that number is only going up.

"But this motion is also about looking longer-term at the kind of society we want. A Universal Basic Income would mean people can spend more time on education and training, or starting their own business, and it would be vital for the arts. With this motion Norwich has recognised the society-wide benefits of a UBI, and we'll now be working with other local and national organisations to get the Government to listen."

ENDS

#### Notes

1

<https://norwich.greenparty.org.uk/news/2020/07/16/council-could-support-a-universal-basic-income-pilot-in-norwich/>

2

<https://www.eveningnews24.co.uk/news/business/universal-credit-claims-soar-in-coronavirus-lockdown-1-6655681>

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## **Government should abandon privatised test and trace system following failings – Green Party**



20 July 2020

- Greens urge government to instead fund local public health teams who already have expertise and public trust

The Green Party has urged the government to abandon the privatised test and trace system [1] following reports of a series of serious failings.

Green health spokesperson Larry Sanders has said the money should instead be used to fund locally-based test and trace protection schemes run by local authorities and regional Public Health England teams.

The call follows reports of data breaches within the test and trace system [2] and claims that only half those at risk in towns in the north-west are being contacted [3].

Sanders said:

“It was wholly inappropriate to award this contract to Serco in the first place, particularly when local public health teams were already in place with the necessary expertise and trust within their communities to deliver an effective and transparent test and trace system.

“The failings that are now coming to light show the warnings that were made at the time should have been heeded before lives were put at risk.

“We must be aiming to join the countries which have brought the infection rate to nearly zero, rather than our current position as a country with one of the highest proportional death rates.

“Instead, the privatised system the government has put all of its faith in is deeply flawed and has increased our vulnerability to coronavirus.

“The government must now take urgent action by cancelling Serco’s contract and backing the local teams who are much better prepared to put in place a comprehensive and safe test and trace system.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/06/serco-wins-covid-19-test-and-trace-contract-despite-1m-fine>

2

<https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-government-admits-its-test-and-trace-programme-is-unlawful-12032136>

3

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jul/19/test-and-trace-failures-risk-exponential-coronavirus-case-growth-in-england-official-warns>

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# Greens lead on first successful motion to demand government reparations for slavery

15 July 2020

A Green Party councillor has lead the way on the first successful motion to demand government reparations for slavery.

Lambeth Council this evening [Wednesday, 15 July] passed a motion calling on the UK government to establish a commission to study the impact of UK involvement in the transatlantic trafficking of enslaved Africans and to make reparations. [1]

The motion, initiated by Green Party Councillor Scott Ainslie [2], is believed to be the first such motion to be passed by a local authority. Greens councillors in Bristol and Islington have also raised the issue in what is expected to become a national campaign.

Ainslie, who worked with the social movement Stop The Maangamizi campaign [3] and the ruling group on Lambeth Council to ensure the motion would pass, said it was vital the government took seriously the impact slavery has had on current racial inequalities in the UK.

He said: “This is an historic motion, and long overdue. The repercussions of hundreds of years of slavery are still all too visible in the inequalities and prejudice which exist in our society today.

“I was delighted that we were able to work together and cross party on this important motion calling on the national government to act. I hope other councils throughout England and the devolved administrations will follow this lead, so we can begin to rid this country from the shameful legacy of its colonial past.”

The motion draws direct links between the legacy of slavery and current issues of racial discrimination. It states:

“The legacy of slavery is responsible for ingraining racial inequality within Western society, that manifests itself both in overt acts of violent racism, such as the death of George Floyd at the hands of American police, Black deaths in police, prison, psychiatric custody and immigration detention in the UK, or in institutional failings to provide sufficient support and care for Black communities, such as the disproportionate impact of Covid-19 on Black people in the UK.”

Greens of Colour chairperson Azzees Minott said:

“Black people have had to work hard to contribute, be great leaders, curators

and innovators in spite of the unequal conditions we have had to deal with for centuries. I'm glad that the Green Party has worked with campaigners to lead the way and address the social injustices that Black people have had to live with for far too long. This motion is the start of something new and it is really exciting."

The motion calls on the UK government to establish a commission to study the impact of UK involvement in the transatlantic trafficking of enslaved Africans.

It also calls for the UK government to establish an All-Party Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry for Truth and Reparatory Justice to commit the UK government to atone and make reparations to the descendants of enslaved African people, in accordance with international human rights law. Lambeth Council will also commit to supporting a more inclusive historical curriculum in schools.

ENDS

## Notes

1

The Council Meeting and full motion text is publicly available:

<https://moderngov.lambeth.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=142&MId=13766>

2

Scott Ainslie is one of five Green Party Councillors in Lambeth, and former MEP for London. The Green Party is the official opposition group on Lambeth Council.

3

Since 2015, the Stop the Maangamizi Campaign (The Maangamizi is the African Holocaust of chattel, colonial and neocolonial forms of enslavement) in association with the Afrikan Emancipation Day Reparations March Committee have been organising the annual Afrikan Emancipation Day Reparations March. The campaign presented the Stop the Maangamizi Petition to the Office of the UK Prime Minister calling for the establishment of an All-Party Parliamentary Commission of Inquiry for Truth and Reparatory Justice:

[https://stopthemaangamizi.com/2015/10/12/about-the-commission-of-inquiry-appc\\_itarj/](https://stopthemaangamizi.com/2015/10/12/about-the-commission-of-inquiry-appc_itarj/)

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