

[Greens respond to NAO report showing Brexit border preparations unlikely to be completed in time](#)



6 November 2020

With the end of the transition period less than two months away, the Green Party has condemned the government for failing to plan for the border checks that leaving the EU makes inevitable, and treating the businesses who really need to 'get Brexit done' with contempt.

Green Party deputy leader Amelia Womack said: "This is not about deal or no deal: whatever emerges from the Brexit negotiations will mean massive changes at our borders. This has been clear since Theresa May decided to leave the single market and customs union nearly three years ago and yet the necessary preparations have not been made.¹ The government has been derelict in its duty to prepare our borders and its own worst-case scenario shows that up to 70% of lorries carrying goods may not be Brexit ready.

"The NAO is right to point out that leaving these preparations so late means public money is being wasted on infrastructure that could and should, have been provided by the private sector if the government had planned ahead. This is nothing to do with the extended Brexit negotiations and everything to do with government incompetence."

Molly Scott Cato, former MEP and party Brexit spokesperson added: "It was astonishing that the Prime Minister failed to mention Brexit preparations during his recorded speech to the CBI earlier in the week. Our businesses are capable of great flexibility but only if they are clear about what they need to plan for. Leaving them in the dark adds to the risks created by Covid-19 and leaves British businesses extremely vulnerable.

"We maintain our position that continued membership of the single market and customs union is in the best interests of British business. This would mean that none of these checks would be necessary and would ensure a continued smooth flow of goods in and out of the UK."

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[Green Party condemns Trump's attempt to overturn democratic process](#)



4 November 2020

Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley, said:

“With millions of votes still to be counted, we utterly reject Donald Trump’s attempt to delegitimise the election process and deny millions of electors the right to have their votes counted. He has undermined the international standing of US democracy and abandoned any claim to be the “Leader of the Free World”.

“We call on our government to publicly condemn Trump’s authoritarian actions and make a clear statement of our continuing support for free and fair elections and the rule of law.

“Democracy requires patience and cooperation. Every vote must be counted.”

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[Green Party criticises government over lack of progress on net zero review](#)



2 November 2020

Twelve months on from the launch of the government’s net zero review (2 November 2019) Green Party deputy leader Amelia Womack said:

“It’s been a year since the launch of the Treasury’s review into going net zero, and we still haven’t seen a word of the promised report.

“As the UK prepares to bring together world leaders next year to drive forward climate action, we must show that we are ready to lead the way. Our government should publish a credible plan to go net zero as soon as possible.

“The Green Party 2019 manifesto is still the most ambitious and comprehensive climate plan published anywhere in the world, taking us to net zero by 2030 while creating a fairer and more equal country.

“We need to see a transformational spending commitment of around £100bn a year to transition every sector of the economy, powering the UK with nearly 100% renewable energy by the end of the decade, along with offering insulation improvements to every single home.

“This Government is nowhere near the right level of ambition. They’re forcing through a £29bn road building programme, they’ve rolled out a measly discount scheme for home insulation but with no one trained to do the work, and they’ve promised a net zero plan which simply doesn’t seem to exist.

“A year on from the net zero review and with a year to go until COP26, we must now see real climate action from this government, not just warm words.”

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[Schools, colleges and universities must close this week if lockdown is to be effective, says Green Party](#)



1 November 2020

Schools, colleges and universities must close this week if lockdown is to be effective, says Green Party

The Green Party is calling for secondary schools, colleges and universities to be added to the list of closures from Thursday after a month-long lockdown in England was announced by the Government.

Co-leader Jonathan Bartley is demanding this afternoon that common sense prevail, following the release of figures by Independent SAGE showing that a lockdown with schools remaining open will be significantly less effective than if they were closed.

“The government is fond of saying they are following the science, but this is an example of them doing the exact opposite,” says Bartley.

“The figures are clear, a lockdown with schools open would need to be three

times longer than if they were closed, to have the same impact. This lockdown is going to negatively affect huge numbers of people, so it has to be worth it.

“Of course there are going to be exceptions – young people with special educational needs for instance should still be able to attend schools in person. But in general, this is the time to shut secondaries and universities, move to remote learning, give the support needed to curb the rates of infection where that can be done, fix the test and trace system which is still woefully underperforming. Use the time to make this lockdown worthwhile.”

Green Party Education spokesperson Vix Lowthion said: “The government produced their own guidelines back in August which clearly stated that secondary schools must be on a remote learning rota or closed when the threat of the virus increases. Surely, that’s where we are now?”

“University teaching can move online during this heightened period and school teachers can focus on online learning plans whilst appropriate home-school rotas are put in place. Yes, it’s a huge challenge for our schools but so is working in a frankly unsafe environment where you’re not being given the back-up you need to keep yourself and your pupils out of harms’ way.

“Along with this there needs to be thought put into safeguarding for children at home, their physical and mental health and making sure they have everything they need to learn – the tech equipment and the support.

“The vast majority of children in secondary schools and young adults in higher education are able to learn from home with supervision from teachers. In the medium term this ‘blended learning’ will disrupt the economy less than a full shutdown including primary schools as in most cases older children have less need for intensive childcare provision.”

ENDS

Independent Sage weekly briefing

30.10: https://www.independentsage.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/WeeklySlide_s30Oct.pdf

August contingency planning guidance for

schools: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/all-possible-measures-to-be-taken-before-schools-and-colleges-close>

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[Green Party Welcomes Expert Evidence from New Pandemics Report](#)



29 October 2020

Green Peer Natalie Bennett has welcomed the greater understanding of the relationship between the destruction of habitats and the risk of causing future pandemics.

Speaking ahead of the launch of the IPBES report into the link between biodiversity loss and pandemics, Baroness Bennett said:

'Our wellbeing and our economy are utterly dependent on the environment, as this important report reminds us. In the case of the coronavirus pandemic and other deadly diseases such as SARS and Ebola, as well as Covid-19, it is clear that a significant factor is our destructive and exploitative relationship with the natural world.

'We are destroying natural forests and other wild habitats on an unprecedented scale, disrupting ecosystems and giving greater chances to viruses to jump to human populations.

'Poor standards of animal welfare in settings like wet markets and factory farms also increases the potential for spill-over events.

'We need to be protecting our few relatively natural spaces, in severely nature-deprived nations like the UK increasing them, and ensuring all of our lands and seas are treated with respect. In the UK we should start with setting a target of designating 20% of Britain as national park and shifting rapidly to agroecological production of healthy food, with crop diversity and an enormous expansion of agroforestry.'

ENDS

Note:

IPBES (Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Service) brought together 22 experts from across the world to provide scientific evidence on risk factors driving Covid-19 and other pandemics and identify what can be done differently to prevent future pandemics.

The launch can be followed live from 14.00 GMT here:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IcKuw5BMgLM&feature=youtu.be>

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