

Investment in flood defences inadequate to cope with climate breakdown warn Greens



15 November 2023

The Green Party has warned that with expected shifts in the British climate to more intense rainfall and greater frequency of flash floods, government investment plans for flood defences contain no guarantee that the country will be more resilient to flooding.

The warning comes as a new report from the National Audit Office highlights that the Environment Agency (EA) has reduced its forecast of the number of properties it will be able to better protect by 2027 from 336,000 to 200,000 – a 40 per cent reduction. The EA is removing 500 of the 2,000 new flood defence projects that were originally included.

A shortfall of £34 million in the budget for maintenance will also leave another 200,000 properties in danger due to erosion of existing flood defences.

Green Party co-leader, Adrian Ramsay, said:

“Despite the promise of record funding, the delivery is less than needed to cope with the potential flooding that we are beginning to witness from climate breakdown. As the thousands who have recently been flooded out will testify, prevention is better than cure. There is a big shortfall in the Environment Agency’s own targets, with over a hundred thousand people living in the most vulnerable areas being told that they are not a priority. Also, the false economy of skimping on maintenance means that another 200,000 people have to keep their fingers crossed that their existing flood defences don’t collapse.

“The government should allow people in vulnerable areas to apply for small grants to protect their businesses and households before a flood hits, rather than only making these available after the event.

“There also needs to be a greater emphasis on creating natural flood defences through practices such as planting trees and hedges that absorb more water and restoring bends in rivers. And rather than bulldozing planning laws, as Labour proposes, we need to reassess planning regulations which unbelievably still allow for new buildings on flood plains.

“Ultimately, we need to deal with the root of the problem, which is to tackle the emissions responsible for heating our planet.

“The UK government needs to show leadership at the forthcoming COP28 climate talks by demonstrating a strong commitment to ending the use of fossil fuels, ramping up renewable energy, insulating homes, and boosting public transport and infrastructure for active travel.

“Unfortunately, instead, the Conservatives are taking a wrecking ball to the climate by making it easier to drill for oil and gas and undermining investment in renewables. Invariably the cost of inaction on flood defences and climate change will be borne by ordinary people.”

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[Green Party reaction to Rishi Sunak's cabinet reshuffle](#)



13 November 2023

Commenting on Rishi Sunak's extensive cabinet reshuffle today, co-leader of the Green Party, Adrian Ramsay, said:

“This reshuffle looks desperate and is a sign that Rishi Sunak has run out of talent. David Cameron started the programme of cuts to our public services which has now brought the NHS to near breaking point. Since his disastrous exit he has cashed in on dodgy lobbying for global oligarchs. And on the odd occasion where Cameron did take a principled stand – such as on maintaining the international aid budget – the government has since reneged.

“As to the departure of Therese Coffey as Environment Secretary, nature can at least temporarily breathe a sigh of relief as we await to see who replaces her. She put in place a subsidy system which is not working for farmers or the environment, and she has failed to tackle the blight of sewage in our rivers – a situation she herself described as ‘a scandal’ when I challenged her on it at a public meeting in Suffolk last month.

“We need a fresh start on the environment, with real action to stop the water companies profiting from failure and a proper system of nature-friendly farming payments which are easy for farmers to access.

“This chaotic and unprincipled government has reached the end of the road. It is doing great harm to the country. We need a general election now.”

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[Greens reject Home Secretary's 'dangerous' comments and call for massive turn out for ceasefire in Gaza](#)



10 November 2023

Green Party co-leader Carla Denyer urged a massive turnout on tomorrow's pro-ceasefire march, as “the strongest way to send a clear message that people want a ceasefire and have no time for Home Secretary Suella Braverman's toxic rhetoric.”

Denyer added:

“This is a march to call for a ceasefire – an Armistice – that is urgently needed. The Green Party wants to see the unconditional release of hostages and the opening up of humanitarian aid to allow a dialogue about a long-term solution that ends the occupation and offers peace and security to Palestinians and Israelis alike.

“The Home Secretary's comments are dangerous, inciting division at a time when we need to bring people together.

“Armistice Day and Remembrance Sunday are national moments of reflection and must be respected. The organisers of the pro-ceasefire march have been really clear that they have no intention of disrupting Armistice Day events. Indeed, I would say that Armistice Day is a very appropriate moment for people to be calling for a ceasefire – an armistice – so that civilians in Israel and Gaza can be protected.

“The Gaza ceasefire call has the backing of the United Nations, humanitarian aid agencies, three quarters of the British public, and growing numbers of countries, including Ireland and France. Hundreds of thousands have been out on the streets peacefully calling for an end to violence.

“The Labour leadership needs to do more than stand on the sidelines. I invite them to throw their full support behind the growing call for a ceasefire.”

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2023 set to become warmest year on record: response from co-leader Carla Denyer



8 November 2023

Reacting to news that 2023 is set to become the warmest year on record following unprecedented October temperatures [1], co-leader of the Green Party, Carla Denyer, said:

“Another week, another indicator that our climate is in meltdown. News that 2023 will almost certainly be confirmed as the hottest year on record, comes just a day after the government made the totally reckless decision to push for new oil and gas licences. This represents a massive two fingers up at communities at home and abroad who are on the front line of floods, droughts and fires, and to future generations who face an uninhabitable planet if we continue with business as usual. It’s also another alarming example of the Conservatives’ allergy to evidence-based policymaking.

“This is another wake-up call – as if any more were needed – on the urgent need to transform our economy and society – ramping up cheaper and abundant renewable resources such as solar and wind power, insulating millions of homes, investing in the infrastructure for active travel, boosting public transport and changing land management practices so that nature can thrive and help to soak up the emissions we’ve released.

“Only Greens give the climate crisis the focus it needs, which is why, whoever forms the next government, we need more Green Party MPs in parliament pushing for climate action.”

Notes

1. [Global heat: ‘Exceptional’ autumn sets 2023 up to break records – BBC News](#)

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Co-leader Adrian Ramsay reacts to King's Speech



7 November 2023

Responding to what is likely to be the last King's Speech from the current Conservative government, co-leader Adrian Ramsay said:

"This King's Speech, which must have really stuck in the throat of King Charles, demonstrates a government out of ideas and out of touch. There's nothing in it to offer communities any hope with the cost of living crisis or the growing impacts of the climate emergency.

"Instead, Rishi Sunak has decided: when in a climate hole, keep digging. Pushing for new oil and gas drilling licences is an act of environmental vandalism. Especially at a time when the country is reeling from hugely damaging storms and floods, which scientists warn will become more frequent, ferocious and destructive as our planet heats.

"Encouraging energy giants to exploit fossil fuel reserves they then sell on the global market at global prices cannot provide either security or cheaper energy bills. Even the government's own Energy Security, Claire Coutinho, had to admit that the government's plan to require annual oil and gas licensing in the North Sea offers no guarantee of keeping energy bills down.

"Energy security, addressing high energy bills and reducing emissions will only come from ramping up cheaper and abundant renewable resources such as solar and onshore wind together with a mass home insulation programme.

"With the Conservatives now looking increasingly like a zombie government today is a big challenge for Labour. Will they pledge to undo the damage inflicted on the climate by the Conservatives today and commit to not a single new oil and gas licence from day one of a Labour government?

"What is clear, is that whoever forms the government after the next general election, Green MPs are going to be needed to push for legislation that will lead to a greener and fairer country."

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