

Green Party announces Earth Overshoot action plan

2 August 2023

Today marks Earth Overshoot Day, the date when humanity's demand for ecological resources and services in a given year exceeds what Earth can regenerate in that year. However, the UK's overshoot day has already passed – it fell on 19th May [1]. In a week when the government has made a series of measures which will make the overshoot even worse, the Green Party has launched an 'Earth Overshoot Day action plan' to help move the UK date as late as possible.

Co-leader Carla Denyer said:

"Earth Overshoot Day is an important reminder that as a globe and as a nation we are currently living beyond the environmental limits of our one precious planet. It falls in a week when the government seems hellbent on overshoot. Maxing out on climate destruction by issuing new licences for oil and gas drilling; failing to tackle the climate crisis in tandem with the cost of living crisis through measures like home insulation; and fueling culture wars over measures which seek to make our neighbourhoods safer and healthier.

"It is important we recognise the hugely unequal way in which the world's resources are consumed, with multi-billion pound corporations and a small number of individuals bearing the largest responsibility for overshoot. This is why Greens would increase taxes on fossil fuel polluters and the super-rich to address inequality and fund the green transition.

"We have set out three key areas – energy, housing and transport – where if policies for a fairer, greener country were implemented, we could help move the date of Earth Overshoot Day as we move faster towards living within the environmental limits of our one planet."

Green Party Earth Overshoot action plan

If we are to move the UK's Overshoot date from its current date of May 19 –

there are three key policy areas that we need to address:

Energy

- No new oil and gas exploration. Ever. This follows the science. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the International Energy Agency and the United Nations say that there can be no new fossil fuel projects if there is to be any chance of keeping global temperature rises under 1.5 degrees.
- Revoke all licences for oil and gas drilling in the North Sea. We challenge Labour to commit to the same.
- A huge boost for renewable energy by investing in renewable energy generation, including onshore wind and in the infrastructure needed for powering up the country with green electricity.

Housing

- Launch a nationwide home insulation programme to cut both carbon emissions and household energy bills, tackling the climate emergency and cost of living crisis in tandem.
- Adopt new building standards that ensure all new homes are built to passivhaus or similar standards, and all new homes are fitted with solar panels and heat pumps as standard where possible.
- We need the right homes in the right place at the right price. Expensive, energy-intensive homes built on greenfield sites with high car-dependency will result in high carbon lifestyles. We need affordable homes, built largely on brownfield sites close to where people work, shop and engage in social activities.

Transport

The Tories have embarked on a culture war pitting 'motorists' against everyone else. But most of us use a variety of ways to get about – walking, cycling, public transport and cars. We all want clean air to breathe, safe routes to walk and wheel, and reliable and affordable public transport. Greens would:

- Support schemes which make streets safer for walking and wheeling – this has been demonstrated to encourage more people to switch from cars to cleaner and more active forms of transport.
- Introduce a ‘£1 fare to take you there’ for all single journeys on buses, as well as free bus travel for under 22 year-olds. And investment in buses and bus routes to serve more communities more frequently.
- Introduce a frequent flyer levy, where those taking the most flights pay the highest tax. The majority of people take one or fewer flights in any given year. We don’t think the tax burden should fall on them but instead on the 15% of the population who take 70% of flights.

Notes

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[Country Overshoot Days 2023 – Earth Overshoot Day](#)

For more information or to arrange an interview contact the press office on press@greenparty.org.uk or call 0203 691 9401

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Greens condemn Rishi Sunak for maxing out climate destruction



31 July 2023

The Green Party has condemned the government’s drive to “max out” North Sea oil and gas reserves, warning it will fuel further climate destruction and do nothing to help tackle the cost of living crisis. [1]

Green Party co-leader Carla Denyer said:

“Today’s announcement from the Prime Minister appears to be nothing more than a cynical attempt to stoke division at the expense of both the climate and

people across the country who are already struggling with rising living costs. Such an announcement, as evidence of climate breakdown is all around us and shortly after the UN Secretary General has said we are in an era of 'climate boiling', makes Sunak nothing short of a climate criminal.

"To say we need to burn more fossil fuels from the North Sea in order to meet net zero by 2050 is blatant greenwash.

"The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the International Energy Agency and the United Nations have all made clear there can be no new fossil fuel projects if there is to be any chance of keeping global temperature rises under 1.5 degrees.

"At the same time, more North Sea oil and gas will do nothing to help reduce people's bills, because it will all have to be sold back to the UK at the international market price.

"The only way to effectively and sustainably reduce people's bills, tackle the climate crisis and create millions of jobs for the future is to invest in insulating people's homes, invest in a rapid rollout of electric heat pumps, invest in cheap and accessible public transport, and massively ramp up renewable energy.

"While the Tories are helping their mates in the oil and gas sector, Labour are bottling out of using the power they have to stop this climate crime. Labour could effectively stop this today if they said they would reverse licences when they come into government: this signal would make investment in new oil and gas financially unviable. Starmer has the power to do this today and I urge him to use it.

"The solutions are already there. The government choosing to ignore them and expand oil and gas instead is an expensive and morally reprehensible decision that will make life harder for everyone."

ENDS

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[https://news.sky.com/story/rishi-sunak-heads-to-scotland-for-netzero-energy-policy-push-12930459](https://news.sky.com/story/rishi-sunak-heads-to-scotland-for-net-zero-energy-policy-push-12930459)

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Greens welcome legal backing for clean air zones that save lives



28 July 2023

Responding to the High Court Judicial Review announcement on the extension of ULEZ to outer London, Green Party Co-leader Adrian Ramsay said:

“Today’s ruling is welcome, and a signal to party leaders of all political stripes that they need to step up and show political leadership in tackling the environmental crisis.

“Clean air zones save lives – the issue is as stark as that.

“Green MP Caroline Lucas has been steering a Private Members Bill through Parliament that would provide for clean air for all, and the government should now back it.

“Of course, in a cost-of-living crisis, change must be paid for by the super-rich and the polluting companies raking in gigantic profits, not the poorest in society.

“The government must now outline the support for people, outside of London, who need to change cars so that the life-saving impact of clean air schemes are maximised when they are introduced.

“Ultimately, this is about cleaning up the air so people live longer, healthier lives. We should all support that”.

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British Gas profits make the case for a carbon tax, say Greens



27 July 2023

Results for energy supplier British Gas show there are “still massive profits to be made from letting the climate burn,” warns Green Party Co-leader Carla Denyer.

British Gas reported profits of £969m for the first six months of 2023, up

nearly 900% from £98m in the same period last year.

Regulator Ofgem allowed the supplier to keep more of its earnings from supplying its 10 million customers during the energy crisis.

Denyer said:

“It’s not acceptable that customers struggling through a cost-of-living crisis are facing higher bills because the regulator and British Gas have done a deal allowing it to rake in a 900 per cent increase in profits.

“If nationalisation wasn’t already one of the most popular Green Party policies there is – these profits very much make the case for the public to take control of this business.

“Making so much profit whilst so many people are struggling to pay their bills, shows our cost of living crisis for what it really is – a greed crisis.

“Fossil fuel companies drive the world’s greenhouse gas emissions, but are still allowed to profit from their damaging activities. A carbon tax would target these big polluters and render coal, oil and gas financially unviable as cheaper renewable energies rise up to take their place.

“These green policies work best when everybody benefits. That is why our policy has always been to use the proceeds of a carbon tax as a social dividend. This will help people to get through this cost of living crisis and make the UK a more equal society. Yields from a carbon tax would provide the money to invest in free home insulation, properly-funded public services and a universal basic income.”

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Greens call for urgent national response to extreme weather events



27 July 2023

Responding to the Met Office State of the UK Climate report [1], Green Party Co-leader Carla Denyer said:

“We are sleep-walking into avoidable disasters. The Met Office report underlines, once again, that the climate is in crisis – and we need to act now to prevent the impacts overwhelming communities and the services we all rely on.

“The wildfires in Europe, and around the world, this summer have shown just how quickly services can strain and buckle.

“We know that this government failed to prepare properly for the Covid 19 pandemic, and it and the Labour leadership have spent the past week running away from the actions needed to both prevent climate-related disasters, and recover from them.

“The tragedy is that we know what needs to be done – but the government and Labour are refusing to show the political leadership we need.

“In 2019, we called for councils to be able to access a £3 billion a year Climate Adaptation Fund, prioritising those areas at highest risk and with the poorest populations.

“If that money had been provided by central government, local communities most at risk from the wildfires and flooding events that are becoming ever more common would be better prepared already.

“We need the government to support local authorities to make changes, but most of all, we need the government to wake up, take responsibility and lead.

“So, today, we’re repeating our call for a £3 billion per year Climate Adaptation Fund that prepares and gives local communities the tools they need to make change happen – from planting more street trees to tackle flooding and overheating in cities, to a public information campaign recognising the effects of heat stroke and what action to take.”

Denyer also outlined other changes necessary, such as:

- A national review of fire service preparedness to deal with the kind of wildfires now sweeping Europe, and a commitment from government to invest in the staffing, protective clothing and resources needed;
- Providing local fire service leads with the freedom to work with local communities to tackle wildfires in a way that best protects people, wildlife, habitats and property;
- Heat stress-testing of all essential infrastructure including railways, pipelines, pylons and roads;
- London Under Water [2], a report from the London Assembly Environment Committee chaired by Green Assembly Member Zack Polanski published in February 2023, found extreme weather events had already led to flooding in hospitals and residential and commercial properties and people trapped in cars. It called for new warnings to be issued to over 200,000 properties most at risk of flooding, including schools, homes and businesses. These recommendations should be followed and other local authorities should be supported to undertake similar studies;

- Populations at high risk from floods – including those living in basements and in high rise buildings – to be supplied with evacuation plans;
- NHS resilience plans dealing with the impact of prolonged heat waves to be regularly tested and the results published to increase public confidence;
- Local councils to be supplied with the resources needed to bring public fountains and safe public drinking water back into use in towns and cities;
- Cafes and restaurants become “heat-safe” spaces offering free water;
- Outdoor working regulations to be reviewed to prevent workers suffering heat stroke, including maximum legal working temperatures to be introduced, as called for by the TUC [3].

NOTES:

[1] <https://www.metoffice.gov.uk/research/news>

[2]

<https://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2023-01/London%20Under%20Water.pdf>

[3] <https://www.tuc.org.uk/blogs/it-too-hot-work#>

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