

# Green-led Lord rebellion halts watering down of pollution rules



**14 September 2023**

The House of Lords voted down several government amendments that would have axed pollution controls on housebuilders. The Nutrient Neutrality rules safeguard sensitive areas such as the Norfolk Broads, but the government was going to require local authorities to ignore any evidence of pollution and to have mitigation measures, costing hundreds of millions, funded by the taxpayer.

Green Party peer, Baroness Jenny Jones, who helped to lead the rebellion in the Lords, said:

“If the government are so desperate to add to the unacceptable levels of pollution in the water, they can bring the measures back in a separate bill, as part of the Kings Speech. They can then consult properly and justify it to a public who are already fed up with polluted local rivers and beaches. And If I was Prime Minister, I wouldn’t relish having a conversation with King Charles about the horrendous state of the country’s waterways.”

“Rejecting amendments outright is a power that the Lords can exercise when the government introduces late amendments that have not gone through the proper parliamentary process of scrutiny.

“Around a fifth of Conservative Party donations have come from property developers in the last decade [1], but that money was drying up and these government amendments were an attempt to get the dirty money flowing again. Fortunately, we have stopped them this time. With a general election due next year, I doubt the government will devote parliamentary time to this polluters’ charter, especially with the water industry already making such a mess of our rivers.”

## **Notes**

1. <https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/dark-money-investigations/20-tory-donations-come-property-tycoons/>

*For further details or to arrange an interview please contact the Press Office on 0203 691 9401 / [press@greenparty.org.uk](mailto:press@greenparty.org.uk)*

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# Greens call for water action now, not more legal squabbling



**12 September 2023**

Reacting to news that the Office for Environmental Protection has found that the government and regulators, Ofwat and the Environment Agency, may have failed in their legal duties to enforce clean water standards on privatised firms [1], Green Party co-leader Adrian Ramsay said:

“The government must stop defending the indefensible and act to enforce the very basic expectations the public have for clean rivers and beaches, and clean water to drink.

“The public are fed up with Ministers claiming that private companies constantly discharging sewage into rivers and onto beaches is unacceptable, but then doing nothing to enforce existing laws.

“We don’t need months more of legal squabbling between the regulators, government and privatised water companies.

“We need action now. That means the government forcing companies to invest rather than pay out shareholder dividends, capping excessive pay to failing water company bosses and bringing our water back into public ownership as soon as possible.”

NOTES

1. <https://www.theoep.org.uk/news/oep-identifies-possible-failures-comply-environmental-law-relation-regulatory-oversight>

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# Green Party calls for a tax on the super-rich in response to effective bankruptcy of Birmingham City Council



## 5 September 2023

Responding to the effective bankruptcy of Labour-run Birmingham City Council [1], Green Party co-leader Carla Denyer said:

“This is just the tip of the iceberg. Over the next two years at least 26 councils in some of Britain’s most deprived areas are at risk of going the same way [2] and the Local Government Association has warned councils in England face a funding gap of almost £3 billion just to keep services standing still [3].

“Thirteen years of Tory austerity has left day-to-day local services delivered by councils crumbling. This cannot be fixed without extra revenue.

“This should serve as a wakeup call to Labour. It’s time to tax the super rich who have seen their wealth mushroom in recent years, so as to provide extra money to maintain vital public services.

“Even millionaires themselves have joined economists and politicians from around the world in calling for extra taxes on the richest [4]. Labour needs to play catch-up and pledge to tax the super-rich, or a future Labour government will drag the country into bankruptcy.”

The Green Party Group Leader on Birmingham City Council, Cllr Julien Pritchard, also blamed mismanagement from the local Labour Administration for the crisis. He said:

“Our Labour-run Council has been dealt an awful hand but they have also played it terribly. They have utterly mismanaged an equal pay crisis with awful consequences. Ordinary Brummies shouldn’t have to pay for Labour’s mess.

“The government will need to step in to ensure Birmingham residents don’t suffer – it’s vital this isn’t solved with a fire sale of the city’s assets at knock down prices.

“We need to see solutions that ensure those most in need in our city are protected. This includes tackling the Council’s appalling housing conditions, supporting residents through the cost-of-living crisis, and protecting the vital services our residents rely on.”

### Notes

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/sep/05/birmingham-city-council-financial-distress-budget-section-114>
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/aug/28/at-least-26-english-councils-at-risk-of-bankruptcy-in-next-two-years>
3. <https://www.local.gov.uk/about/news/lga-analysis-councils-face-almost-ps3-billion-funding-gap-over-next-two-years>
4. <https://taxextremewealth.com/>

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## [Education system left crumbling after 13 years of Tory austerity, say Greens](#)



**4 September 2023**

Responding to the reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete (RAAC) crisis, where crumbling concrete has resulted in the full or partial closure of 104 schools, the co-leader of the Green Party Carla Denyer said:

“Our education system has been left crumbling after 13 years of Tory austerity. But successive governments have known about the problems with RAAC going all the way back to the 1980s.

“Our schools are not fit for purpose. This was revealed during the pandemic when failures to properly ventilate our schools became apparent. We’ve also seen portacabins in place semi permanently in many schools. And now this dodgy concrete crisis.

“As chancellor, Rishi Sunak decided to axe investment in new schools from 100 to 50. That was despite a Department for Education survey that revealed the need to rebuild 300 to 400 schools.

“At the very least, the prime minister should reverse the decision he made as chancellor to halve the rebuilding programme. Beyond that we need proper investment in our schools’ infrastructure to bring buildings up to a standard fit for the 21st century.”

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[Green Party co-leader Carla Denyer](#)

# [makes urgent call to save rail ticket offices](#)



## **1 September 2023**

Carla Denyer, MP candidate for Bristol Central and co-leader of the Green Party of England and Wales, has urged residents to make clear their objections to the closure of ticket offices before the public consultation ends at midnight tonight [Friday 1 September].

The three-week consultation has been over proposals to close most of England's 1,000 station offices, including at Bristol Temple Meads Station.

Carla said:

“Stations in and around Bristol are vital transport hubs for thousands of people and the ticket office staff there are often the only source of advice for people trying to navigate the ticketing system.

“Having a human presence at a ticket office is especially important for disabled and elderly passengers who may have additional requirements.

“The fact that our trains are operated by different, privatised companies already makes ticketing overly complicated, making ticket office staff crucial. And, in our current cost of living crisis, they are invaluable to helping people find the cheapest route to get from A to B.

“This is all part of the Government's lack of investment in public transport in recent years to the detriment of people and communities, particularly the disabled and elderly who can become isolated without these crucial services.

“If the Government wants to save money on the subsidies it gives to private train operating companies, it should do what the Green Party has long proposed, return the franchises to public control when they expire so that money spent on trains goes back into trains – and ticket offices – not into the pockets of remote shareholders.

“Public transport should be run for people, not profit. I hope as many residents as possible are able to take part in this consultation before it closes today and make sure their concerns are heard.”

ENDS

*Image of Carla at Bristol Temple Meads Station ticket office available upon request*

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