

Councils must be compelled to meet online to avoid Covid-19 power grab, say Greens



7 May 2020

The Green Party is calling on the Government to ensure local democracy is not further disrupted by the Covid-19 crisis by compelling local councils to meet virtually.

A petition launched this morning [1] – on what would have been election day in thousands of local communities – calls for online meetings to be mandatory for Parish, Town and District Councils to avoid decisions being pushed through without proper discussion and scrutiny.

Green Party Co-leader Jonathan Bartley said: “Today would have been the opportunity for people across England to exercise their democratic choice – the chance for them to have their voices heard about what happens on their doorstep.

“But instead what they’re experiencing is decisions made under the radar, more power being put into the hands of a few people and the representatives they voted for being shut out of debate.

“That might mean a massive shopping centre gets the go ahead, or the demolition of a whole estate, it might mean cuts to services.

“We’ve been calling out the cases from individual councils for weeks and examples continue to flood in from our Councillors but the Government is doing nothing.

“That’s why we’re making this specific call today, that councils must be compelled to meet online during this crisis period and stop being given free-reign to hide behind a lack of technical skills.”

ENDS

Notes

1

The Green Party petition calls for all councils to be compelled to hold virtual meetings.

There are serious concerns over scrutiny and decision making in Lambeth where Jonathan Bartley is co-leader of the opposition. [See release for details](#).

Notable examples of councils resisting virtual meetings have been received

from Green Party Councillors in Oxford City Council and Norwich City Council.

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