

Green Party calls for emergency fuel duty rise to invest in walking, cycling and public transport



8 May 2020

- Crash in oil prices and concerns over the safety of public transport could see spike in number of people using cars
- Extra revenue from 25p/litre rise to be given to local authorities to spend on, walking, cycling and public transport to enable social distancing
- Caroline Russell: "If we don't act now the fall in global oil prices could mean more driving, traffic jams and filthy air as lockdown is gradually eased and more people begin to travel"

The Green Party has called for an emergency fuel duty rise on petrol and diesel to allow local authorities to support social distancing by improving conditions for walking and cycling and investing in public transport in response to the coronavirus crisis.

The Greens have warned that a crash in oil prices could undermine moves in towns and cities across the country to enable more people to walk and cycle, if it means the price at the pump continues to fall and encourages people to drive more. [1]

Since 2010, successive governments have frozen fuel duty rises year on year. Fuel duty stands at 57.95p/litre, earning the treasury some £28bn a year in revenue [2]. On this basis an extra 25p/litre could raise in the region of £12bn for public transport and active travel.

Green Party transport spokesperson Caroline Russell said the extra revenue could then be allocated to local authorities to invest in measures needed to support social distancing on public transport and on our streets with street space reallocated from vehicles to people walking and cycling.

Russell said:

"If we don't act now the fall in global oil prices and concerns about social distancing on public transport could mean more driving, traffic jams and filthy air as lockdown is gradually eased and more people begin to travel.

"It is vital we act to create a healthier future as the ongoing coronavirus crisis makes our lives much more local and the climate emergency needs us to shift to low carbon options.

"An increase in fuel duty after the ten year freeze would generate billions of pounds for local authorities to invest in public transport for essential workers and healthier streets for walking and cycling so people can get to

work, take daily exercise and make their local journeys safely while maintaining social distance.”

ENDS

Notes

1

UK petrol prices fell by their largest margin in 12 years in March, triggered by a collapse in the world oil price. In April, the price of Brent Crude dipped below \$20 a barrel and is currently trading at around \$25 a barrel.

<https://www.oilcrudeprice.com/brent-oil-price/>

As the price of crude oil has slumped, the price paid at the pumps has declined drastically and has fallen since early March from around £1.23/litre to £1.05/litre for petrol and from around £1.26p/litre to £1.15/litre for diesel.

<https://media.rac.co.uk/pressreleases/low-oil-price-leads-to-sharpest-drop-in-petrol-and-diesel-prices-in-12-years-2988585>

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<https://obr.uk/forecasts-in-depth/tax-by-tax-spend-by-spend/fuel-duties/>

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