

Greens call for action on water companies as England faces heat health-alert and drought



9 August 2022

The Green Party has called for a series of measures to help stop three billion litres of water being wasted each day as a heat health-alert comes into force and England faces its worst drought in decades, with many households facing hosepipe bans and water shortages.

Greens are calling for an immediate enforcement order on water companies, along with a cut to executive pay, an end to dividends to shareholders and for the water supply to be brought back into public ownership as soon as is practicable to do so. They point to monopoly water companies losing between a quarter and a fifth of the water in their mains through unrepaired leaks while sewage regularly flows into rivers and coastlines [1].

Adrian Ramsay, co-leader of the Green Party, said:

“As the country faces a severe drought and people are asked to cut their water use, more than three billion litres of clean water is wasted every day due to a network of pipes riddled with leaks [2]. Shockingly, the most wasteful water companies waste more water than they provide to their customers. It’s time to hold the water companies and the water regulator to account and see some firm action against this scandal.

“We need Ofwat to apply an enforcement order on companies to properly carry out their statutory functions [3] – which includes ensuring that water actually reaches people’s homes and sewage doesn’t go into watercourses or end up on our coastline.

“But beyond that, the water industry cannot continue to be rewarded for failure. The £57bn paid out in dividends over the last 30 years [4] and hugely inflated salaries of water bosses [5] should have gone towards plugging the leaks. Instead of these companies being awash with profits and leaking funds towards shareholders, Greens say we should cut dividends and ensure water bosses earn no more than ten times the salary of the lowest paid in their companies.

“Ultimately, to end leaks, stop sewage discharges and cut bills we need to take the water supply back into public ownership, which is what the Green Party believes must be done at the earliest practicable opportunity.”

Notes

[1] [Ofwat’s patience with water firms is drying up | The Times](#)

[2] [Wasting Water | Billions of Litres UK | Maintain Drains](#)

[3] [Our duties – Ofwat](#)

[4] [England's privatised water firms paid £57bn in dividends since 1991 | The Guardian](#)

[5] [Water bosses' £58m pay over last five years a 'national scandal' | The Guardian](#)

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[Greens call for immediate financial support for most vulnerable following interest rate rise](#)



4 August 2022

Responding to the news that the Bank of England has raised interest rates to 1.75%, the biggest rise in 27 years, Green Party peer Natalie Bennett said:

"Today's report from the Bank of England is devastating and paints a picture of our economy caught between the twin evils of out-of-control inflation and recession. Our entire economic system is in crisis and this Conservative government clearly has no idea what to do about it.

"The Bank of England is swinging its interest rate sledgehammer with little regard for the impact on working families who are already struggling. Raising interest rates to tackle inflation is like a doctor reaching for cyanide in response to a strychnine poisoning.

"Meanwhile those who should be showing leadership are indulging in fairy tales about tax cuts and growth.

"A decade of austerity and dependence on fossil fuels has left us economically and socially vulnerable to oil price shocks. A complete retrofit of our economy is urgently needed to ensure resilience.

"We need to see a raft of measures to provide immediate financial support to those who need it most, including an uplift in Universal Credit by £40 a week and a much bigger windfall tax, without the Tory government's loopholes, on oil companies who are currently making huge profits off the suffering of everyone else."

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[Replace ‘scraps’ with proper transport funding across the regions, say Greens](#)



4 August 2022

Greens have accused the government of providing ‘scraps’ for transport funding across English regions compared to London and the South East. They point to the announcement of just £200 million to develop a mass transit network in West Yorkshire [1] compared to the £18.8 billion spent on Crossrail in London [2].

Green Party transport spokesperson, Matt Edwards, who is a Green Party councillor in Bradford, said:

“For decades transport spending in London and the South East has eclipsed the scraps we see in the North and other regions of the country. The paltry amounts promised to West Yorkshire to help deliver a new rapid transport network to one of the largest metro areas in Europe simply reinforces this imbalance. Regions outside London and the South East are being sold short.”

“The dire financial situation of Transport For London and the cuts to services across the South East show even these areas are not getting the funding required. But proportionally the rest of the country absolutely needs more funding if this government is serious about “levelling up.”

The Green Party recently called for axing the £27bn road building budget and diverting the money to pay for huge investment in public transport [3]. Councillor Edwards points to Greens in power delivering improved and affordable public transport:

“In Scotland Greens successfully pushed for free bus travel for all those under 22 and in Herefordshire, Greens on the Council ensured that Covid Recovery funds were used to provide free weekend buses. And just this week in Sheffield, after years of campaigning, Green councillors secured the return of a free circular bus service in the city centre [4].

“We need to transform how people in this country get around to get more people out of cars, and on to public transport, cycling and walking. The

funding the government is offering is not going to deliver that anywhere.”

Notes

1. [West Yorkshire mass transit: £200m for ‘development and initial delivery’ | Yorkshire Post](#)
2. Crossrail project funding breakdown:
<https://www.crossrail.co.uk/about-us/funding> Govt contributions to £18.8 billion total: Department for Transport grant: £5.11 billion, 2x loans (one part of original deal – to be paid back via business rates, the other part of delay package, to be paid back via fares): £2.125 billion/£750 million. Total Govt contribution, including loans in overall subsidy = £7.98 billion
3. [We must go further on buses, say Greens | The Green Party](#)
4. [Sheffield bus services: FreeBee circular bus returns to Sheffield city centre | The Star](#)

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[BP profits and fear of energy bills: Greens call for ‘super tax on dirty profits’](#)



2 August 2022

Commenting on almost £7bn profits by BP between April and June [1], while one in eight UK households fear they have no further way to make cuts to afford a sharp increase in annual energy bills this autumn [2], Green Party co-leader Adrian Ramsay said:

“These dirty profits made by climate wrecking corporations are completely obscene when millions of households are having sleepless nights over how they are going to pay their energy bills this winter. We need to super tax the grotesque profits of oil and gas companies to ensure that everyone has a warm home this winter.

“Every week that goes by with no leadership from government is a week wasted that could have been spent insulating homes. And every pound that goes into the pocket of a fossil company executive is a pound that should have been spent on insulating the homes of lower income households.

“But the Tories have left it too late. We cannot insulate enough homes fast enough to protect people this winter, which is why we need to adopt the policy of a social tariff, ensuring that the amount people pay for energy relates to their income. And to add £40 per week to the income of all those on universal credit and other legacy benefits to help with the knock-on effect of energy price rises on food and clothing.”

Notes

1. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/business-62382624>
2. [More than one in eight UK households fear they have no way of making more cuts | The Guardian](#)

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Greens challenge Conservative leadership candidates on Earth Overshoot Day



28 July 2022

The Green Party has called on the Conservative leadership candidates to commit to ensuring that the UK lives within its environmental means in the next ten years.

As Earth Overshoot Day [1], the date when humanity has used all the biological resources that Earth regenerates in a year, falls the week after the UK experienced extreme heat caused by climate change [2], the Greens have called on Liz Truss and Rishi Sunak to place as much urgency on the climate and ecological emergencies as they are in discussing economic growth.

Green Party co-leader Adrian Ramsay said:

“Just last week the UK witnessed the hottest temperatures on record and the

consequences of climate disruption became clear for all to see.

“As wildfires raged and people lost everything as their homes were burnt to the ground, the two candidates to become our next Prime Minister were talking more about economic growth rather than tackling the climate crisis.

“Unfortunately, successive governments have for too long focused on economic growth at all costs, without acknowledging that it’s the quality of our economy that matters, not just the quantity. A narrow focus solely on economic growth will exacerbate the climate crisis and worsen social inequalities.

“On Earth Overshoot Day, I am calling on the Conservative leadership candidates to commit to broadening their focus from economic growth and show how they will ensure that the UK lives within our planetary means within the next ten years.

“Our government should be working across the board to ensure we’re leading the way on pushing back Earth Overshoot Day further every year.

“This requires a shift away from chasing economic growth only, and instead measuring the success of our economy by how it maximises people’s happiness without exceeding planetary boundaries. It also means policies to tackle the scourge of inequality and ensure we share the earth’s resources fairly.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.overshootday.org/>

2

<https://news.sky.com/story/uk-heatwave-temperature-hits-39-1c-in-surrey-a-new-record-12654770>

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