

[Green Party disappointed as Government speeds towards HS2](#)



23 February 2017

***Caroline Russell AM: "The Government must be held to account over its terrible decision to squander our limited resources"**

The Green Party is disappointed the HS2 Bill will receive royal assent today [1] and has pledged to keep standing up for the environment and local communities.

Caroline Russell, Green Party transport spokesperson and London Assembly Member, said:

"Today is a sad day for campaigners who have worked tirelessly to stop this wasteful project going ahead, but we'll keep on fighting to protect the local communities and environment from the damage threatened by HS2.

"The risks far outweigh any potential benefits and it's staggering so much money will be poured into HS2 when better transport projects improving local rail networks desperately need investment. The Government must be held to account over its terrible decision to squander our limited resources on a project that will save only a few minutes on trips between London and Birmingham."

Notes:

1. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-39057772>

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[Green Party calls for investigation following claims of child inmates kept in solitary confinement](#)



22 February 2017

The Green Party has demanded the Government investigate allegations of young offenders being held in solitary confinement in British prisons [1].

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

“It was already clear our prison system was reaching crisis point but these stories reveal a new level of callous disregard for the human rights of some of the youngest and most vulnerable offenders.

“Being kept in solitary confinement for even just short periods of time causes severe distress and has lasting impact. I fail to see how the Ministry of Justice can possibly think this treatment will result in positive outcomes. These young offenders need to be rehabilitated, not punished further using one of the most cruel and unhelpful methods possible. We urgently need an investigation into these allegations.”

Notes:

1. <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/uk-prisons-child-inmates-solitary-confinement-un-torture-rules-young-offenders-institutes-break-jail-a7591781.html>

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[Green MEP launches post-Brexit agriculture reports and calls for 'green tape' as Leadsom attacks 'red tape'](#)



21 February 2017

Green MEP Molly Scott Cato, a member of the European Parliament's Agriculture Committee, has launched [two reports](#) on ideas for the future of farming post-Brexit. The launch comes on the day the [National Union of Farmers begin their annual conference](#) in Birmingham, where Defra Secretary, Andrea Leadsom, again [attacked the EU](#) for 'tying farmers up in red tape'. She also called for a system based on simpler, more effective rules, where farmers will be 'free to grow more, sell more and export more.'

However, Ms Leadsom offered farmers [no clear plan on farming post-Brexit](#) and

Dr Scott Cato says that [questions to the government](#) reveal they lack ideas on the future of farming after the UK leaves the EU.

The two reports – one by the [Soil Association](#); the other by Simon Fairlie of the [Land Workers' Alliance](#) – foresee a future where policies put soil health and biodiversity first, and where the way we use land helps tackle climate change. They say that to achieve this, farmers will need to receive at least as much money as they currently get through the Common Agriculture Policy (CAP). Molly Scott Cato said:

“Like Ms Leadsom, I don’t want farmers tied up in red tape, but we do need to bind ourselves in some green tape. We need to ensure land management protects and improves our soils, encourages biodiversity, and helps tackle climate change. The reports I have launched today contain a wealth of ideas on how we can achieve this.

“They also call for direct payments based on land area to be scrapped; instead future payments would to be based on paying farmers for the public benefits they provide and for protecting the environment.

“With the government planning to remove us from the single market where around 65% of total UK agricultural exports are sold, platitudes about growing more, selling more and exporting more will ring hollow for most farmers.

“These reports show how to move UK agriculture away from a dependence on export markets and towards creating thriving rural communities by supporting family farms and relocating food production. Brexit could be a unique opportunity to move towards an ecologically and economically sustainable farming system, but the government seems determined to move us in the wrong direction.”

Dr Tom MacMillan, Director of Innovation at the Soil Association, said:

“We’re hearing a fair bit of consensus from farming, nature and public interest groups on the big principles for agricultural policy after we leave the CAP – that the public expect high standards on animal welfare, for example, and that public money should pay for public benefits. What’s missing are practical and inspiring ideas that seize the chance to make a better fist of it, and face up to monumental challenges like climate change. So we’ve tried to set out a few game-changing ideas in our report”.

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Green Party: Government must stop pushing costs of social care onto councils and residents



20 February 2017

The Green Party has called on the Government to up spending on councils after it was revealed local services will still face deep cuts despite nearly every local authority in England planning to raise council taxes [1].

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

“The Government’s failure to invest in councils has put many in a desperate situation, with no choice but to cut valuable community resources like libraries and youth centres. The Government appears intent on starving local services and bringing almost every local authority close to financial breaking point.

“Proper social care for the elderly should be a red line. It should be non-negotiable and centrally funded. Government needs to take responsibility and invest in councils, rather than pushing costs onto residents and creating a postcode lottery of care. Instead of bringing the social care system to its knees, the Government should be facing up to the simple fact that if we want good social care we need to pay for it. The Green Party is the only party proposing that we make the right choice to invest in a secure future for our older people with free social care for the over 65s. ”

Notes:

1. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-38982643>

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Greens denounce Ministers' pandering to industry lobbyists on plastic

[pollution](#)



18 February 2017

Keith Taylor MEP: 'These latest revelations expose the Government's shameful decision to kowtow to industry lobbyists and roll back important recycling progress.'

Keith Taylor, Green MEP for the South East, has issued a stinging criticism of government Ministers as documents reveal the [influence of plastics industry lobbying](#) on the decision to cut UK recycling targets. The revelations come as the latest 'Great Winter Nurdle Hunt' uncovers [widespread plastic pollution](#) on Britain's beaches.

The UK government quietly reduced recycling targets for plastic waste last year, after dozens of lobby groups and plastic producers pushed for lower rates, according to documents obtained by Energydesk.

Energydesk obtained 62 of the 63 responses to a government consultation on recycling targets.

The majority of respondents to the consultation were plastic producers or industry groups. Of those, all pushed for a reduction in the targets.

Keith, a member of the European Parliament's Environment Committee, said:

"Plastic pollution is choking our oceans and our beaches, but the documents obtained this week demonstrate the UK Government appears more concerned with protecting the profit margins of multinational corporations and industry lobbyists than safeguarding Britain's natural environment."

"It is extremely concerning that almost three-quarters of UK beaches are blighted by the raw materials of the plastic industry. These plastic pellets pose a significant threat to our precious wildlife and damage the health of our oceans and seas."

"These latest revelations expose the Government's shameful decision to kowtow to industry lobbyists and roll back important recycling progress. Far from being a party working for the many, the Conservatives prove, once again, they are the party of powerful and privileged vested interests."

"We cannot let the Government use the EU referendum as an excuse further water down essential recycling targets. The [EU Circular Economy Package](#) sets an ambitious and common EU-wide target for recycling 75% of packaging waste by 2030. Ministers must make a firm commitment to maintaining and implementing these ambitious targets post-Brexit."

"Plastic pollution does not respect borders nor national sovereignty. For the sake of the health of our oceans and our beaches, to protect our precious environment and our beloved wildlife, Theresa May must also commit to

maintaining a close relationship with our European neighbours to combat the problem.”

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