

Plan to scale back wildlife protections and climate change action just a snapshot of absurdity of extreme Brexit, say Greens



9 April 2017

Green Party Animals Spokesperson: ‘If the revelations are reliable, they offer just a snapshot of the absurdity at the heart of Theresa May’s Brexit.’

The Government’s [apparent plan](#) to weaken wildlife protections and ‘scale back’ Britain’s climate ambitions reveals the absurdity of Theresa May’s extreme Brexit agenda, according to the Green Party’s Animals spokesperson.

Keith Taylor MEP, who is also a member of the European Parliament’s Environment Committee and the global Climate Parliament, said:

“If this proves true, it amounts to a promise to sacrifice vital and hard-fought safeguards in a grubby, and plainly desperate, attempt to secure toxic trade deals with nations who have little respect for wildlife or climate change – the most pressing issue we face globally. That the revelations come just days after [India made it clear](#) Theresa May could not rely on Britain’s colonial past to expedite trade negotiation is extremely telling. Just over a week on from triggering Article 50 and it would appear the Government is beginning to realise the economic realities of the Prime Minister’s extreme Brexit agenda.”

“Nobody voted to throw away wildlife safeguards or jettison vital climate ambitions. EU wildlife protections and climate change targets are some of the strongest and most ambitious in the world; proof positive of the value of working with our European Neighbours to tackle cross-border challenges. The best and easiest way of maintaining these regulations post-Brexit is through continued membership of the Single Market. Instead, ‘secret documents’ reveal the Government wants to ‘scale back’ our ability to tackle wildlife crime and ignore the urgent need to mitigate the worst effects of climate change – all in a desperate rush to secure damaging free trade deals to compensate for the economic shock of being yanked out of the Single Market. If the revelations are reliable, they offer just a snapshot of the absurdity at the heart of Theresa May’s Brexit.”

“Greens will continue resisting an extreme Brexit that threatens our precious wildlife and our ability to tackle climate change.”

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[Vote Green to protect local services and the environment, co-leader says](#)



7 April 2017

***Party standing record number of candidates**

***Co-leader Jonathan Bartley launches campaign in Worcester**

***Campaign priorities listed in five point pledge**

The Green Party has pledged to protect the environment after Brexit and oppose cuts to local services as it launched its local elections campaign this morning.

Co-leader Jonathan Bartley launched the campaign in Worcester today, where Green councillors hold the balance of power [1]. The party is aiming to attract voters across the country who feel let down by other parties.

Over 90% of people in the UK live within 20km of a site protected under the EU's nature laws [2] and Green councillors will be fighting to protect the local environment after Brexit. The Green Party is campaigning for a new Environmental Protection Act to replace EU legislation [3].

The Green Party will be challenging council cuts at a local level as well as opposing an extreme Brexit. Candidates will be campaigning to stop cuts to essential services and calling for investment in affordable housing, clean transport, healthcare and education. On Worcestershire County Council, the two Green councillors have held the council to account for the building of an environmentally damaging new incinerator and for attempting to reduce bus services.

The party has unveiled a five point pledge for its local elections campaign. Green councillors will fight for:

***Local green spaces**

***Decent social care**

***Air fit to breathe**

***Affordable homes**

***Action on climate change**

The Green Party is fielding a record number of candidates in the elections on May 4, with 1,561 standing across England, Scotland and Wales [4].

Bartley said:

“Brexit is an unprecedented threat to the environment and puts 40 years of legislation at risk. These laws protect our air, water and climate and they affect everyone in the UK who values our natural world.

“Our message today is clear: vote Green on May 4 and our councillors will stand up for the environment, whether they are fighting fracking, improving air quality, investing in renewable power and natural flood defences or divesting council pensions from fossil fuels.

“Wherever they are elected, Green councillors make a meaningful difference in their communities, by working with other progressive parties to improve people’s lives and oppose unnecessary cuts to local services. Everyone deserves proper social care and to live in their own home.

“The Green Party is the only party fighting both an extreme Brexit and Tory Government cuts, protecting public services locally while strengthening relationships internationally.”

Notes:

1. Worcester City Council was one of the first to adopt the Living Wage. The two Green councillors also worked with other parties to set aside money in next year’s budget to install solar panels on a council-owned multi-storey car park, generating income as well as operating electric car charging points. They also helped introduce energy efficiency measures at the Grade 1 listed Guild Hall and to plant trees in air pollution hotspots to help reduce health problems.

2. The contributions of the EU nature directives to the CBD and other multilateral environmental agreements. *Conservation Letters*, 9(6), 479-488. Beresford, A. E., Buchanan, G. M., Sanderson, F. J., Jefferson, R., & Donald, P. F. (2016).

3. <https://inews.co.uk/essentials/news/environment/caroline-lucas-accuses-government-extraordinary-complacency-brexit/>

4. The Green Party also has candidates in five mayoral elections on May 4. Will Patterson is standing in Greater Manchester, Tom Crone in Liverpool City Region, James Burn in West Midlands, Julie Howell in Cambridgeshire & Peterborough and Darren Hall in West of England. Jess Mayo is contesting the Manchester Gorton parliamentary by-election.

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Green Party statement on US airstrikes in Syria



7 April 2017

The Green Party has responded to the US missile strike launched by Donald Trump against a Syrian air base following a suspected chemical weapons attack [1].

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, said:

“We condemn President Assad’s barbarous and criminal use of chemical weapons against innocent men, women and children. This is the latest in a long line of attacks against his own people and the international community has clearly failed to hold him to account. We also remain concerned about the dire humanitarian crisis in the region. However, there is no simple answer to this most complex of crises and President Trump’s air strikes risk exacerbating an already complex situation in the absence of any coherent strategy to contain the violence and in the longer term, build peace. In the interim, the UK Government should immediately reconsider its inhumane treatment of the people fleeing this terrible conflict. We must allow more refugees from Syria to find safety in our country.”

Caroline Lucas MP, Green Party co-leader, said:

“If our ultimate goal is to protect people – and it should be – there are other effective steps that could be taken, including stepping up soft and hard diplomacy, looking anew at sanctions, the freezing of assets and the continued flow of arms to the region. Crucially we need to send a strong signal to Assad that his actions are intolerable whilst at the same time avoid any escalation of violence that puts more civilian lives at risk. It is deeply concerning that President Trump took this action without the permission of Congress and it is now of the upmost importance that Prime Minister Theresa May calls on him to help build some kind of international consensus around what happens next. I also urge her to remember that the UK must not commit to any military involvement in Syria without a vote in Parliament, and to confirm whether or not she is talking with Russia about the role they can play in bringing this conflict to an end.”

Notes:

1. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-39523654>

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[Dieselgate: Greens welcome EU step in the right direction](#)



4 April 2017

Keith Taylor MEP: “Green MEPs were instrumental in securing an inquiry into the emissions fraud scandal on behalf of European citizens who have twice been the victims of Dieselgate”

Responding to the [vote on the findings of the Dieselgate inquiry](#), Keith Taylor, Green MEP for the South East and a member of both the European Parliament’s Environment and Transport committees, said:

“Greens were instrumental in securing an inquiry into the emissions fraud scandal on behalf of European citizens who have twice been the victims of Dieselgate; through their exposure to toxic fumes and the complete contempt for their consumer rights. Today’s vote is both a vindication and an important step forward in taking an EU-wide approach to ensuring that a similar scandal can never be allowed to happen again. It’s a reminder that Dieselgate was a problem of too little Europe, not too much.”

“The report adopted today by MEPs will help break the cosy relationship between national authorities, car manufacturers, and the technical bodies in charge of the testing. The legislation also contains welcome steps towards greater transparency, with the Commission required to make public when it questions the non-compliance of a vehicle, giving consumers a better understanding of emerging problems.”

“UK Conservative MEPs were the biggest opponents of the Dieselgate report and were responsible for watering down its findings, which excoriate their friends in the car industry. That and the UK Government’s promise of a bonfire of regulations offers British citizens an alarming insight into what kind of (lack of) protections we might look forward to outside of the EU.”

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Green Party: Scrappage scheme the only way to help people ditch diesel



4 April 2017

The Green Party has responded to news the Government plans to encourage people to get rid of diesel vehicles by introducing what has been dubbed a “toxin tax”.

Caroline Russell AM, Green Party transport spokesperson, said:

“It’s good to see the Government recognising the damage dirty diesel engines do to our air and our health, but if we are serious about encouraging drivers to leave diesel behind we need to help them to do that. We urgently need a proper scrappage scheme which helps businesses swap diesel for cleaner vehicles, while people giving up domestic cars should have access to efficient public transport, car clubs and streets that enable safe walking and cycling.”

Notes:

1. <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/edition/news/20-daily-toxin-tax-for-diesel-drivers-mhkzggdn3>

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