

Greens: Leeds council air pollution plans “woefully inadequate”



5 December 2017

Leeds Green Party has labelled the city council's new air pollution plan [1] “woefully inadequate”.

Launched on the 65th anniversary of the “Great Smog of London” which caused the death of approximately 4,000 people, the party says the council needs to be much bolder, ambitious, and optimistic in its plans for reducing air pollution in Leeds. They say the council should be looking to create a “breathing city” where everyone can breathe clean air, enjoy green spaces, and get about by walking, cycling, or public transport.

Around 700 people die prematurely from air pollution in Leeds every year [2]. The Green Party argues that the council's new strategy won't reduce the amount of Particulate Matter (PM) in the air [3], could cause public transport fees to rise rather than fall, and doesn't contain significant targets for improving cycle or walking infrastructure in Leeds.

Chris Bell, Leeds Green Party Policy Officer said:

“The council's plans are only focussed on reducing NOx emissions with no focus on Particulate Matter. There has been no guarantee that bus and train companies will not raise their fares to compensate for the fines they will face for non-compliance, which does not discourage private car usage. These plans do not go far enough to lower the impact of air pollution on the health of Leeds citizens.”

Notes

[1] New plan will be available here: <http://www.leeds.gov.uk/Pages/Default.aspx>

[2] <https://www.yorkshireeveningpost.co.uk/news/leeds-named-hotspot-for-air-pollution-deaths-as-epidemic-costs-local-nhs-480m-1-7698344>

[3] <https://uk-air.defra.gov.uk/assets/documents/reports/aqeg/pm-summary.pdf>

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Education system has reached a “new low” says Green co-leader



1 December 2017

***Green Co-Leader writes to Education Secretary after revelations that children with additional needs are being sent home from school**

The Green Party's Co-Leader Jonathan Bartley has today written to the Education Secretary Justine Greening over what he describes as a “new low” in the education system.

Bartley appeared on a BBC Breakfast report this morning into SEND children [1]. During the course of the programme a headteacher admitted that his school has often had to ask parents to remove their disabled children, and others with additional needs from his school because they do not have the staff resources to properly support them.

Mr Bartley's letter to Ms Greening asks her to disclose how many schools are facing similar problems and what she intends to do to address it.

Speaking after his appearance on BBC Breakfast, Mr Bartley said:

“This is a new low for the education system which is becoming a hostile environment for disabled children and those with additional needs. It is unacceptable and clearly discriminatory for children to be sent home from school because of a lack of resources.

“As the father of a child with special needs I am no stranger to the challenges and barriers children face in accessing school. But the disclosure from the headteacher I heard from this morning was on another level. It's not just a case that the support in schools for children with additional needs is poor: in some cases it is totally non-existent. Children are now being denied access to education.

“Education is a right for everyone not an optional extra. This is something that urgently needs addressing and that is why I have written to the Secretary of State.”

Notes

[1] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b09gsfkgp>

[2] Full text of letter:

Dear Justine,

Today at a BBC Breakfast event in Manchester the headteacher of a local school told me how, as a result of year-on-year cuts to the education budget,

his school often has to ask parents of SEND children to take them home because they do not have the staff in place to support them.

As the father of a son with spina bifida I was heartbroken to hear that story. I can only imagine how demoralising it must be for the parents of the SEND pupils at that headteacher's school to know that their children are routinely missing out on an education. I am in no doubt that the headteacher is doing all he can to support those pupils but of course he can only manage with the resources he has at his disposal.

I'd like to know:

- a) Do you know the extent to which SEND children are missing out on school days because mainstream schools do not have the resources to support them?
- b) Given that this seems to be a not irregular problem, what the government is going to do to address it?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours,

Jonathan Bartley

Co-Leader of the Green Party

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[Greens: "Latest detention statistics reveal catalogue of horrors"](#)



30 November 2017

Green Party Co-Leader Jonathan Bartley has respnded to the release of the latest asylum detention statistics, labelling them a "catalogue of horrors."

The data, released this morning by the government [1], appears to show that:

- The total of number of asylum seekers detained in British detention centres has increased in the last quarter by 522

- The number of children detained in the last quarter has increased by 12
- The number who have been deported has also increased by 44
- The longest resident of a detention seeker has now been there 1845 days, over 5 years

Mr Bartley said:

“The publication today of the latest detention statistics reveals a catalogue of horrors. Britain is detaining more asylum seekers, more children, and doing this for longer. And rather than help asylum seekers find refuge, more and more are just being sent back to the countries they came from – often to face torture and death. These statistics highlight an asylum system which fails to reach basic levels decency and humanity.

“Rather than locking up people indefinitely, the government should be looking at how it can welcome, settle, and support asylum seekers. Britain should be processing asylum claims in local communities and offering far more support to help asylum seekers get on in this country – things like English lessons, training, and counselling to help them overcome the horrors they have faced. The current system is a shame on Britain and a shame on this government.”

Notes

[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/662536/detention-jul-sep-2017-tables.ods

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[Green deputy leader to visit Ryedale fracking site](#)



30 November 2017

Green Party deputy leader Amelia Womack will visit the Kirby Misperton fracking site in Ryedale on Friday afternoon (December 1) to meet local demonstrators and visit the protection camp.

Womack's visit is part of a series called 'Green Friday' where Green Party politicians spend a day at the site [1].

Earlier this month Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley was dragged across the road by police while giving a speech to protesters at the site [2].

Womack said:

“I’m looking forward to meeting protesters who are putting their bodies on the line every day to stand up for their communities, particularly after appalling treatment of Jonathan by police only a few weeks ago. I’m so inspired by how dedicated the Ryedale community is in its stand against fracking.

“Fracking is dirty, dangerous and unnecessary. It will jeopardise our climate commitments and prolong our dependency on fossil fuel for years to come. The Government should be leaving fossil fuels where they belong – in the ground – and investing in modern, clean energy for the future.”

Notes:

1. <https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2017/11/17/natalie-bennett-to-join-fracking-protest-at-kirby-misperton/>
2. <https://www.standard.co.uk/news/uk/green-party-joint-leader-jonathan-bartley-dragged-along-road-by-police-at-yorkshire-fracking-protest-a3688386.html>

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[Green Co-Leader to call on other parties to “rally behind free movement” at debate](#)



30 November 2017

The Green Party Co-Leader Jonathan Bartley will use a panel debate on migration later today to urge other parties to “rally behind free movement”.

Bartley will argue that the leadership of other parties are not making the positive case for immigration and that that is dividing communities.

He will say that “to lose the gift of freedom of movement would be like losing a part of our identity as humans beings.” Bartley will also say that other parties must “abandon their fixation with treating migrants as economic statistics” and talk instead about their worth as human beings.

Mr Bartley will be speaking at a debate on the future of migration policy in Britain hosted by the consultancy PwC [1]. Also on the panel will be Anna Soubry MP and Labour peer Lord McConnell.

Mr Bartley is expected to say:

“We have to stop thinking of migrants as economic numbers that will either benefit or hurt our economy. This fixation has to end. We need a new language for migration, one that focuses on migrants as people, fathers, mothers, daughters, sons, and friends.

“To move is to be human, it’s to be free but the Both Conservatives and Labour are surrendering that freedom. To lose the gift of freedom of movement would be like losing a part of our identity as humans beings. As of this day I want to see all progressives in all parties coming together to defend freedom of movement and to launch a wholesale defence of our right and the rights of others to travel.”

Notes

[1] 14:30pm – 17:30 Migration Still Matters: Toward a new national consensus on migration. Embankment Place, London WC2N 6RH

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