

Greens announce three-step plan to boost High Streets across the country

Green Party leader Zack Polanski and newly elected Gorton and Denton MP, Hannah Spencer, will use a visit to a High Street in Manchester today to announce a three-step plan to revive High Streets that will enable local communities to reclaim them.

The Green Party will call for:

1. Affordable leases for local businesses on every high street to end dominance of multinational chains and help independent traders to thrive.
2. Using powers such as compulsory purchase orders to bring long-term empty shops back into public use to get art, leisure and music back into High Streets.
3. Giving residents a real voice in shaping their High Streets, putting decisions in the hands of local people and making sure the money spent in the local community stays there.

Green Party spokesperson: "We want our high streets to be hubs for our communities to come together – places where small, local businesses thrive; where empty spaces are used for the benefit of the community, and where residents can have direct input into how their neighbourhoods are planned and developed."

Zack Polanski said:

"Green Party Councillors would put the interests of the local community first – above a corporation's private property rights, and will use the powers local authorities have to over empty and derelict properties and get our High Streets thriving again. Our three-step plan will keep wealth in the very communities that generate it and make high streets places that reflect local priorities. We will also extend rent controls to small shop premises, giving councils the power to prevent landlords from hiking up the price and driving out independent retailers."

Hannah Spencer said:

"Our high streets can and should go back to being places that serve the needs of the communities they're in, instead of making corporate chains even richer. Too many of our high streets are either boarded up or full of huge companies that suck money out of our local economies and pay profits to big bosses and private shareholders. Entire streets have been hollowed out, and so many places are a bad mix of boarded-up shop fronts, bookies or vape shops. This does nothing to improve the well-being of people in our communities, and it drains our local economies. We feel this so much more deeply in the North. Our three-step plan will reverse High Street decline and give us back town centres that we can be proud of."

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We deserve better: Green Party launches local election fundraiser with message for Starmer and Farage



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"Something big is happening. Across England and Wales people are finally saying: we deserve better".

With those words, Zack Polanski launched the Green Party's fundraiser for the local elections on 7 May, where the Green Party will take on the big money of Labour and Reform and look to build on recent record of winning across the country.

Hannah Spencer's win in Gorton and Denton and Rob Yates defeat of Reform in Kent have shown that the Green Party can take on both Labour and Reform and win.

Zack's message: now we need your help to urgently scale up for local elections in just over two weeks' time.

[embedded content]

Mandelson's mates and Trump wannabees? We deserve better

As Zack said, from Manchester to Margate, people around the country are already saying 'we deserve better'.

And if you needed any more evidence that we do, Labour and Reform have provided plenty this week.

The intrigue around Peter Mandelson's vetting failure should not distract from this simple fact: Keir Starmer chose to appoint Mandelson as ambassador to the US despite knowing of his close relationship with notorious paedophile Jeffrey Epstein. This is a mess entirely of Starmer's own making and exposes the rot that runs right through Labour.

Reform meanwhile are taking their cues from another former Epstein associate: Donald Trump.

Farage's party this week announced their own ICE-inspired plans to rip up the rights of refugees in the UK – with the intention of copying Trump's deportation policies that have torn communities in the US apart.

The Green Party is clear: we deserve better than Mandelson's mates in Labour and Reform's Trump tribute act.

People power vs billionaire backers

The Green Party is standing thousands of candidates at these elections. And as Zack said: "When the community come together, the Green Party can and do win."

We can win big in May – but we'll need your help.

Labour and Reform are both backed by billionaires and take money from oil and gas, private healthcare, gambling and arms companies.

As Zack pointed out, that means two things: 1) They work for them – not you. And 2) they have a lot of money.

We deserve better – and that's where you come in.

The local elections on 7 May are just two weeks away and there is still all to play for – every extra pound you can spare will help us challenge Labour and take the fight to Reform.

Donate to the Green Party and on 7 May let's show Starmer and Farage that we deserve better.

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[Greens to 'hold government's feet to the fire' on 'weakening' link between gas and electricity prices](#)

21 April 2026 by [Green Party](#)

The government is set to announce [a plan to weaken the link between electricity and volatile gas prices](#), which it says will better protect consumers from energy shocks triggered by international conflicts.

Carla Denyer MP, the Green Party's spokesperson for Energy and Net Zero and a former offshore wind engineer, gave her reaction:

"As someone who has been calling for the price of electricity to be decoupled from high price of gas since 2022, I am so relieved to hear that the Energy Secretary is finally looking to address this.

"But this announcement deserves two cheers, not a full-throated three.

"They have been too slow to act. It is nearly two years since the election – two years in which they could have prevented a crisis like this rather than just respond to it. Households are once again paying the price.

"And the voluntary nature of the proposal raises questions in a crisis-ridden energy market where sellers have the upper hand.

"I will be holding the government's feet to the fire to make sure they get this right; that it is delivered at speed, and bill-payers are finally able to properly reap the full benefits of clean and affordable renewable energy."

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[Green Party responds to Reform UK's 'ill-thought-out and cruel' plan to deport hundreds of thousands granted](#)

asylum

20 April 2026 / 20 April 2026 by [Green Party](#)

Responding to Reform UK's [latest attacks on asylum seekers](#), deputy leader of the Green Party of England and Wales, Rachel Millward said:

"Another superficial, ill-thought-out and cruel announcement by Reform UK, which will fail to tackle the roots of the asylum crisis whilst making sure more suffering is heaped on the most vulnerable.

"We do not want to see people risking their lives crossing the channel in small boats. What we need is strong international cooperation to address the reasons that people are having to seek asylum in the first place: war, poverty and the climate crisis, and to provide safe & managed routes that would offer a real alternative to people smugglers."

"We must remember our basic humanity. Many of those seeking asylum have endured horrendous trauma. They include mothers and children. We have a duty to offer compassion and sanctuary, not insecurity, fear and intimidation.

Millward also criticised the BBC for its recent reporting on asylum issues:

"We are disappointed that in recent days the BBC, with its own reports stretching over multiple days, failed to show the challenges those genuinely claiming asylum face. Of course applications for asylum must operate under a proper legal framework, but introducing ever more restrictive rules won't make the system more efficient. What it would do is make life even harder for the most vulnerable."

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[Zack Polanski and Rachel Millward make affordability pledge on visit to volunteer foodbank](#)

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Green Party Leader Zack Polanski and Deputy Leader Rachel Millward visited a Sussex foodbank this week to meet volunteers, call for an end to the normalisation of food bank use, and announce measures to tackle the

affordability crisis.

'Normalised' foodbanks: a symbol of the affordability crisis

Life in the UK has become unaffordable.

For a sign of just how bad things have got, look no further than the normalisation of food banks.

Barely a feature of life in this country 20 years ago, foodbanks and the emergency food parcels they provide have become an essential support for many households.

On their visit to the volunteer-led Community Fridge in Forest Row – which provides a vital service to the local community – Zack and Rachel highlighted the scale of the problem of food insecurity, and stressed that even those who are comfortable and in work can quickly find themselves affected.



Green Party Leader Zack Polanski and Deputy Leader Rachel Millward talk with Forest Row Community Fridge directors Jo and Gina (Photo: Aldo Ciarrocchi).

The numbers speak for themselves: around 6.5 million people a year turn to charitable food providers, and one in five people doing so are from a working household.

Zack said “The affordability crisis is something affecting nearly everyone, from the most vulnerable to people in work and comfortable, where any change in circumstance can push people over the edge into requiring a foodbank.”

Rachel meanwhile put the issue in the context of severe inequality in this country:

“The UK is the sixth largest economy in the world where the 50 richest families hold more wealth than the poorest 50% of the population. Yet millions face food insecurity, food poverty and turn to foodbanks to prevent them going hungry. A high proportion of these are people from working households.”

A “totally avoidable” crisis

Make no mistake, the affordability crisis is not inevitable. As Zack made clear, it is a matter of political choice:

“This crisis is totally avoidable and down to choices made by this Labour government and previous Tory governments. The Greens have a plan which would make different choices, taking on corporate power and vested interests to give ordinary people a way out of this crisis”

During their visit to Forest Row, Zack and Rachel spoke about those different choices and how they could make life just that little bit more affordable – starting with energy bills.

When the current energy price cap ends in July, our bills are set to go up. At a time when all other costs are only going one way (not down...) an energy bill hike is the last thing anyone needs.

That’s why the Greens are calling on the Government to stop energy bills rising in July by guaranteeing universal support with energy bills.



Green Party Leader Deputy Leader Rachel Millward speaks to media outside Forest Row Community Fridge (Photo: Aldo Ciarrocchi)

Affordability, affordability, affordability

Of course, energy bills aren't the only pressure households face.

Housing costs are one of the biggest drivers of household poverty in the UK. So it will be no surprise that rent controls were the next step in the affordability plan Zack and Rachel laid out.

This call doubled down on the housing affordability pledges Zack made when launching the Green Party's campaign for the local elections last week ([read more on that here](#)).

Alongside local Greens' impressive record on providing affordable social homes in their communities, the Green Party has long campaigned for local authorities to have the power to control overheated rental markets in their area – an obvious measure to protect households, but one that Labour simply refuses to consider.

The final affordability measure Zack and Rachel put forward may be less obvious, but no less important: rejoining the customs union.

Leaving the EU has been a disaster that has made us all poorer, with Brexit adding hundreds of pounds to the average family's grocery bill in the years since. Easing trade with our closest neighbours would be a significant step towards bringing down food prices for good.

Wherever you live, Greens know times are tough. The basics of having a nice life shouldn't feel unaffordable or out of reach – but for too many, they do.

It's time, as Rachel said, "to end the normalisation of food bank use and the scourge of food and energy poverty affecting so many families. Greens are bringing policies to the table to do just that."



Green Party Leader Zack Polanski and Deputy Leader Rachel Millward with Green Party supporters in Forest Row (Photo: Aldo Ciarrocchi)

Elect councillors with just two vested interests: people and planet

Zack and Rachel weren't the only Greens in Forest Row. With hardly any notice, a crowd of over 200 Green Party supporters and campaigners turned out to welcome the party's leader and deputy leader.

After meeting volunteers at the foodbank and giving media interviews, Zack spoke to the assembled Greens about the "huge set of elections" in just three weeks' time.

'Huge' not only because "we need to stop Nigel Farage", but also because local people "deserve better representation", and on 7th May they can vote Green to get it.

And what exactly does a Green vote get you?

In Zack's words: "People and councillors who are not in hock to vested interests – well I tell a lie. They have two vested interests: to protect people in the community and to protect the planet and the environment."

We deserve better: support people power vs billionaire backers

Hannah Spencer's trailblazing win in Gorton and Denton and last week's stunning by-election win in Margate has shown that Green Party can indeed take on Nigel Farage's Reform party and win.

And we can do it again in May – but we'll need your help.

Labour and Reform are both backed by billionaires and take money from oil and gas, private healthcare, gambling and arms companies. Which means two things: 1) They work for them – not you. And 2) they have a lot of money.

We deserve better – and that's where you come in.

Donate to the Green Party to help us take on the vested interests and win big on 7th May.



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