

# Emergency intervention needed to steer Britain from the brink



7 March 2017

The Green Party is calling for 'an emergency intervention' to steer Britain away from the brink of the crisis in the NHS and social care, and to clampdown on air pollution which is estimate to end 40,000 lives prematurely every year.

The Greens are also calling for the Government to protect small firms from the business rate hike, raise tax for the richest, stop corporation tax cuts and reverse a planned tax hike on solar panels.

The five demands [1] from the Green Party are:

- 1) An emergency aid package to protect health and social care services
- 2) Toughest ever action on air pollution
- 3) Protection of small firms from Business Rate hikes
- 4) Ensuring the richest people and biggest corporations pay more tax
- 5) Reversing the [solar tax hike](#)

Jonathan Bartley said:

"This budget must be an emergency intervention to steer Britain away from the brink of multiple crises.

"After years of privatisation and underinvestment the future of the health service now hangs in the balance, and social care services are at risk of collapsing. If the Government is serious about working on behalf of the majority of people in this country then they will unveil an emergency aid package to protect health and social care services. We know that funding a world class healthcare service will cost more, which is why the Government should reverse their planned cuts to corporation tax and their tax giveaway to high earners. Failing to properly fund health and social care would be a dereliction of duty from this Government – and would leave any claim they had to be standing up for working people in tatters."

Caroline Lucas MP said:

"There is an air pollution emergency happening in Britain – and the Government has to act now to tackle it. The Chancellor should immediately raise vehicle excise duty on new diesel cars, to send a signal to the market that this fuel must be phased out. The freeze on the fuel duty escalator should also end – thus freeing up billions of pounds which the Government

should plough into public transport, walking and cycling. In recent years the cost of motoring has dropped considerably while the price of catching the bus or train has skyrocketed – if we're serious about reducing the amount of toxic fumes in our air we've got to shift people out of cars and onto affordable public alternatives.

"The Chancellor must also use this budget to get a proper grip on Britain's climate policy. At a very bare minimum that must mean reversing the solar tax hike that's set to hit community groups and schools – and it must mean more support for onshore wind too."

## **ENDS**

### **[1] A Green Budget would include:**

#### **1) An emergency aid package to protect health and social care services.**

This means an additional £30bn per year on the NHS by 2020 (as estimated by [NHS England](#)) + at least £2.6bn to cover the social care [shortfall](#).

#### **2) The toughest ever action on air pollution.**

*VED of £800 on new diesel (would raise 500m per year)*

*Unfreeze the fuel duty escalator (£9bn per year by 2020)*

#### **3) Protect small firms from the unfair business rate hike.**

*We are calling for an extension of Small Business Rate Relief for small businesses, including increasing the threshold for 100% relief to £15,000, tapering to at least £18,000.*

#### **4) Ensuring the richest people and biggest corporations pay more tax**

*New taxes:*

Top rate 60% income tax would raise 2.3bn

Robin Hood Tax could raise up to £2bn

Wealth tax could raise up to £25bn

+

Reverse the Corporation tax cut for larger firms – and raise level to 30% for big companies (G7 average is 32.3%): Would raise £12.5bn by 2020

Reverse the high rate tax change thus raising £600m by 2020.

Reverse the reduction in capital gains thus raising £670m by 2020.

#### **5) Reverse the solar tax hike**

The changes to Business Rates from 1 April (see above) may lead to a six to

eightfold increase in the Rateable Value on solar photovoltaics (PV) installed for self-generation. According to the Solar Trade Association, this may make installing and running solar PV economically unfeasible for thousands of businesses and organisations across the UK – indeed, some businesses with panels already installed may be forced to remove them.

Given the urgent need to decarbonise our economy and the important role that solar must play in that, this would be a worrying and deeply regressive development. It would further undermine the confidence of the business and investor community. At a time when the Government is considering its new Emissions Reduction Plan and a new industrial strategy, this move would send all the wrong signals.

As well as affecting businesses, the tax increase will also affect schools and community groups. It seems particularly unfair that the increase will affect state schools who have installed solar panels but not private schools, who are exempt due to their charitable status.

This indiscriminate and disproportionate tax increase comes at a time when solar continues to outperform all expectations. This year, the UK saw an estimated 6,964 gigawatt hours (GWh) generated by solar over the summer period: 5.4% of the UK's electricity demand. Indeed, solar power generated more electricity than coal in the six months running up to the end of September. On top of this success, a recent report by Aurora Energy Research found that the cost of integrating solar – set to be the cheapest form of electricity generation by the mid-2020s – into the national grid is “negligible”.

To reverse this solar tax hike, the Green Party calls on the chancellor to extend the exemption on small-scale (less than 50KW) solar installations.

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## [Speech: Promoting Our Prosperity](#)

I'm delighted to join you today for the final session.

Over the last two days you've been discussing a security landscape that is becoming increasingly unpredictable and uncertain.

Recently the independent reviewer of terrorism law (Max Hill QC) said the danger of attack is as great as at any time since the 1970s.

Yet we don't just face problems from the asymmetric threat of Islamist

extremism but also from Russian aggression and cyber warfare.

At the same time, we're preparing to implement the decision of the British people to leave the European Union; stepping back from the EU while stepping up our commitment to international security.

## **IMPLICATIONS FOR UK DEFENCE**

What do all these events mean for UK defence policy?

The short answer is that, despite big changes, the important things are staying the same.

Our three National security objectives listed in 2015's Strategic Defence and Security Review – to protect our people, project our influence, and promote our prosperity – remain right for today.

We're one of only five NATO nations meeting the 2 per cent target and we'll continue investing in defence equipment: using our growing budget and £178bn 10-year equipment plan to spend on world class capability such as Dreadnought submarines and carriers, frigates and F-35.

Above all, we're determined to become, what our Prime Minister calls, a "global Britain", working with our NATO allies to front up to aggression from a position of strength, while joining forces with our bi-lateral friends to bring a tapestry of capability to bear on international problems.

## **RELEVANCE FOR DEFENCE INDUSTRY**

But what does all this mean for the Defence industry?

Rest assured, we're more aware of your value than ever.

And nowadays we're not just looking for you to devise new game changing technologies, making the most of autonomy, cyber and big data, to keep one step ahead of our competitors.

Nor are we simply expecting you to focus on value for money as the demands on our budget rise.

We're also turning to you to enhance the UK's prosperity.

Our SDSR was the first time we officially recognised promoting prosperity as a national security task.

Now that strategic exports are a core activity for MOD, we need your help increasing defence sales and inward investment.

It's a lot to expect but the good news is we're here to help.

That doesn't mean we're going to retreat into a protectionist shell.

We don't believe in propping up inefficient industries

Instead, we believe in the power of free markets to push our companies further.

So we're going out of our way to create a can-do, pro-growth culture.

In three ways:

## **1. INNOVATION**

First, we're investing in innovation.

This is an area where Britain traditionally has had strength in depth.

We gave the world radar, the jump jet and the world wide web.

Today we're leading the way in wing design and intelligent systems.

Tomorrow we will have produced dragonfly drones and sub-orbital engines.

But we can't rely on natural talent and serendipity to see us through.

So six months ago, we launched our innovation initiative.

It's all about pushing the boundaries, making defence more open to risk and new ideas.

Consequently, we're speeding up the time it takes for suppliers to turn concepts into capabilities.

We've set up an Innovation Fund worth around £800m over 10 years to pump prime investment into advanced new solutions, such as laser directed energy weapons and unmanned rotary wing technologies.

And we're running a set of competitions to develop leading edge capabilities in everything from rapid and automated integration of new sensors to machine learning algorithms.

Last week we unveiled the next stage in our plan.

Professor Hugh Durrant-Whyte has become our new Chief Scientific Adviser, with direct accountability for the defence research programme...which is 1.2% of Defence's annual budget.

He'll be working across defence and internationally to stimulate defence innovation, commission research, and use technology to keep our people safe.

At the same time, we've been gearing up our new Defence Innovation Advisory Panel, with high-profile appointees including astronaut Major Tim Peake; outgoing director of GCHQ, Robert Hannigan; and the founder and chairman of McLaren, Ron Dennis.

These inspiring individuals will challenge the Defence status quo...ensuring we become innovative by instinct.

## **2. INDUSTRIAL STRATEGY**

There's a second way in which we're creating a pro-growth culture.

We're tapping into the broader currents of Whitehall's industrial strategy by strengthening clusters of defence capability around the country, in Scotland, the South West, the North West and North Wales.

We're determined to make this a country that works for everyone.

Sir John Parker's recent report suggested how we could use such centres of expertise to improve our shipbuilding capability: embracing digital engineering and proposing the creation of a Virtual Shipbuilding industry model.

In other words, rather than a single shipyard building a ship from scratch, a vessel would be built in blocks by different sites across the UK as we've done with carrier, ensuring high productivity, competitive cost and a dramatic reduction in build time.

Sir John's report will inform our shipbuilding strategy due out in the Spring.

But switch domains from sea to air and you can already see what stronger clusters will mean for the UK.

Over in North Wales, Government and business joined forces and last year won the F-35 Maintenance, Repair and Overhaul contract award.

Their bid was so compelling it established Britain as a hub for all European F-35s: sustaining, in turn, potentially thousands more high value jobs across the supply chain, generating hundreds of millions – and potentially several billions of pounds of revenue – supporting hundreds of jobs in Wales and extending Britain's reputation for excellence worldwide.

I'd like to thank all those who helped make it possible.

It was a truly team UK effort.

## **3. PARTNERSHIPS**

But this brings me to my final point.

Creating a pro-growth culture, means strengthening partnerships between Government and industry.

So we'll be looking to you to collaborate more – sharing the risk and reward of research and development.

We want you to build exportability in as standard from the outset, placing even greater emphasis on the use of modularity and open systems.

And we'll be looking for you to follow Boeing's example and increase bid opportunities for UK suppliers – large and small.

Significantly, Boeing recently announced their first European manufacturing facility will be in Sheffield.

You help us and we'll help you.

That's why we're making sure our refreshed industrial strategy will continue supporting the growth and competitiveness of UK companies.

It's why we're reaching out to imaginative industries outside defence...to import new ideas and ways of working. This time last week I was in Farringdon, chairing the Small Business Forum at a digital start-up company.

It's why we're working day and night alongside our colleagues in the Departments for Exiting the EU and Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy to address issues that affect industry after we leave the EU; whether it's Defence exemptions from EU regulations on movement of goods or access to skills and experience.

And it's why we will continue to tirelessly bang the drum for British business at home and abroad through export support; our expanded Defence attaché network; and speeches like this.

## **CONCLUSION**

So despite mounting pressures, exciting new possibilities are opening up.

And by working together to build a winning mentality and develop a pro-growth culture we will do more than enhance our capability, more than increase our prosperity, more than inspire a new generation of innovators.

Together we will emulate the effect of that famous F-35 contract in Wales and send the strongest of signals to the world that our great defence industry and our great global nation are very much open for business.

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## **[News story: South West characterisation disposal project: New site announced](#)**

The MMO facilitated the process of the designation of the new site by the funding partners including Associated British Ports (ABP), Cattewater, Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) and Centre for Environment Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (Cefas).

### **Consultation**

The designation of a new site involved considering and balancing a variety of views from the fisheries, business, defence and scientific communities as well as from local residents.

The MMO asked for people to share their views regarding a potential new marine disposal site in the South West from 29 November 2016 until 23 December 2016. This consultation period was extended to 6 January 2017 to allow for detailed representations.

## **Fisheries**

Representations were received from the commercial fisheries sector. These were considered as part of the consultation process. The [Site Characterisation Report](#) was published on the MMO's website, and direct consultation was undertaken with 8 organisations related to commercial fisheries.

## **Decision**

After considering all available information, the MMO concluded that the proposed area is the optimal, sustainable alternative disposal site for dredged material.

Plymouth Deep is now open for marine licence applications for the disposal of dredged material.

All activities relating to the disposal of dredged material at sea are required to apply for a marine licence. As part of the licensing process, the MMO is required to assess various contaminants, to assess the suitability of the material for disposal at sea and in the proposed location. The MMO is content that any material disposed at the site will be suitable for disposal to sea.

## **Rame Head**

It is important to note that the Rame Head South designated disposal site remains an open disposal site. Its status will change after 5 years to 'disused' and then to "closed" after 10 years.

The MMO has produced an evaluation report which details the conclusions drawn from a review of the evidence submitted, and the representations received during the consultation period. The evaluation report can be viewed on the [Marine Selected Cases](#) of the website.

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## **[News story: Action Counters Terrorism](#)**

With the terror threat becoming increasingly complex and varied, police are calling on communities to act on their instincts to help prevent atrocities taking place in the UK and overseas.

Today sees the launch of a national campaign by [Counter Terrorism Policing](#)

urging the public to act on their instincts to help tackle the terrorist threat.

'Make nothing happen' focuses on the critical role the public can play in defeating terrorism. The campaign will be the first under a new branding platform called [ACT: Action Counters Terrorism](#). This urges the public to report suspicious activity to help police bring dangerous offenders to justice and prevent terror attacks in the UK and overseas.

At a time when the scale, volume and complexity of the terrorism threat continues to grow, police are advising the public to act to report any potential suspicious activity or online content they come across and are concerned about.

The public already contribute intelligence to around a third of the most serious terrorism investigations. This new campaign reassures communities that they shouldn't be concerned about wasting police time or getting someone into trouble.

The message is clear – 'don't worry, don't delay, just act' by:

- reporting suspicious activity to the police by calling confidentially on 0800 789 321 or at [gov.uk/ACT](http://gov.uk/ACT)
- reporting online terrorist and violent extremist material [online](#)
- remaining alert at home, work and when out and about, so we can all play our part in defeating terrorism and keeping everyone safe

Mark Rowley, National Counter Terrorism Policing lead, said:

Since 2014, the threat of terrorism has been severe, which means that an attack is highly likely. When attacks have occurred in the past, people have said that they suspected something was wrong but were worried about wasting police time by coming forward. That couldn't be more untrue – with some of our highest priority investigations benefiting from information received from the public. We have always said that 'communities defeat terrorism'. That is why the ACT campaign urges the public to do just that.

It is very encouraging that in a third of cases involving our most serious terrorist suspects we have benefited from information from the public. The number of calls and online reports we receive is also increasing. This is testament to people's trust in the police – but now we are appealing for even more.

Counter terrorism policing is working hard to keep the public safe and we have, with our partners in the security services, helped stop 13 attacks since the appalling murder of Lee Rigby in May 2013. However, advances in technology make it more complex and

challenging for us to spot would-be terrorists because it's easier for them to be in contact with others and be radicalised in a relatively short space of time.

The threat is becoming more varied and the move towards low-tech attacks on crowded places, like those we have seen in major European cities and beyond, makes it even more important everyone remains vigilant and acts, by calling us confidentially, if they are concerned about suspicious activity.

Security Minister Ben Wallace adds:

The horror of recent terrorist attacks in Europe and beyond is a shocking reminder of the threat we all face. We know that we are not immune as the threat to the UK is currently assessed as severe, meaning an attack is highly likely.

Our police and security and intelligence agencies work tirelessly, often unseen, day in and day out to keep families and communities across the country safe. The public also have a vital role to play as they are ideally placed to notice activity which is unusual.

I welcome the police's ACT campaign which raises awareness about what to look out for and provides people with easy-to-access advice.

Ultimately, this is a job for all of us. I encourage people to follow the campaign's message to remain alert but not alarmed by the threat and report any concerns to the police.

More information on what to look out for and how to contact police can be found at [gov.uk/ACT](https://www.gov.uk/ACT). You can also report suspicious activity by calling police confidentially on 0800 789 321.