

Zack Polanski: We will judge Andy Burnham on whether he provides solutions to the affordability crisis, the inequality crisis and the climate crisis

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Reacting to Andy Burnham's first speech as Prime Minister, Green Party Leader Zack Polanski said:

"The Green Party wishes the new Prime Minister well. There is an affordability crisis, an inequality crisis, and a climate crisis. We will judge Andy Burnham on whether he provides the leadership necessary to deliver solutions. His speech today failed to mention any willingness to challenge the vested interests of the establishment which Labour has become part and parcel of and has driven these crises. Without this being fundamental, nothing progressive can truly be achieved.

"We need action on sky high rents, with rent controls, we need to end the rip off and take water into actual public ownership, not tinkering with the existing failed model as is being suggested. We need wealth taxes as a first step towards tackling gross inequality and getting serious investment into our economy and public services. The Prime Minister has talked about ending the 40 year failed experiment of Thatcherism, but he looks likely to appoint a Chancellor who appears to have been chosen on the demands of bankers on the basis of little change.

"There is a climate crisis and yet the mood music coming from within the Labour Party has been to reverse policy on North Sea drilling, to appease powerful fossil fuel interests, and Donald Trump. A reversal of existing policy would be disastrous for the climate and make no difference to people's bills. Only serious investment in renewable energy will provide the energy security and reduced bills that we need.

"We also need real democratic renewal with electoral reform to ensure all people's votes count.

"Keir Starmer's foreign policy was disastrous. His support for Israel's genocide through political and military support will be his ultimate legacy. The new Prime Minister must do more than making apologies for his predecessor's poor communication and recognise the genocide, and end military support for Israel. On Iran, he must stand up to Donald Trump and end Trump's use of British air bases for the illegal war in Iran.

"The Prime Minister's speech today will leave many sceptical that Andy Burnham really plans to challenge the wealth and power of the establishment and it all starts to look and sound like more of the same. Now is the time for bold politics."

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