

Greens welcome right to scrap First Past the Post in Welsh local elections



Green Party

19 November 2020

The Green Party has welcomed the Senedd's decision to allow councils in Wales to adopt a fairer voting system for next year's local elections.

The Local Government and Elections (Wales) Bill [1] gives councils the option to drop the First Past the Post system in favour of the Single Transferable Vote.

Wales Green Party leader Anthony Slaughter said:

"It is great to see Wales finally starting to adopt a fairer voting system. Councils have an enormous impact on the lives of us all and so it is only right that people's votes actually count.

"As in England, there is usually a very low turnout in local elections and a real lack of diversity in the outcome. The changes in this Bill, including votes at 16 and automatic voter registration, could not only increase participation but also provide a much fairer and representative result.

"We would now urge all councils across Wales to take up this option and drop the archaic First Past the Post system, or else risk ending up with a situation where some people have a fair vote and others do not."

Notes

1

<https://business.senedd.wales/mgIssueHistoryHome.aspx?IIId=26688>

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Greens warn defence budget increase fails to address biggest threats to our security



Green Party

19 November 2020

- **Amelia Womack: 'We are walking blindfold into a video game dystopia without a public debate'**

The Green Party has criticised the government announcement of a £16.5bn investment in defence which is taking place outside the framework of a full spending review. This represents a 10% increase in the defence budget

Green Party deputy leader Amelia Womack said:

“Just one day after offering a paltry amount for the climate, and amid talks of slashing the aid budget, the decision to prioritise the defence budget is clearly about posturing on the international stage rather than protecting security at home.

“As we leave the European Union we should establish the role of Global Britain as a peace-maker not warmonger. It should be our role to show leadership on multilateral negotiations to reduce the threats from drones and robots rather than accelerating a digital arms race.”

Greens argue that investment in a new space command, cyber force and artificial intelligence agency fail to target the real source of threats to our security.

Womack said:

“This is a massive escalation in the digital arms race but does nothing to address the real threats to our security that come from pandemics [1] and the climate emergency [2], both of which are exacerbated by our inability to live in balance with our planet. We are walking blindfold into a video game dystopia without a public debate.

“To justify this investment on the basis of jobs is both immoral and

deceitful. The work that really needs doing to protect our future lies in making our homes, farms, and transport system fit for the climate crisis.”

ENDS

Notes

1

RUSI report, [Revamping Crisis Resilience and Security in the Post-Pandemic World](#)

2

The World Economic Forum, [Global Risks Report 2020](#).

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[Greens critical of government procurement process for Covid equipment](#)



Green Party

18 November 2020

Responding to report from National Audit Office [1], Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley said:

“Back in June I wrote to the NAO asking them to look into these contracts, so I welcome their report this morning.

“There has been a very bad smell around the awarding of Covid contracts from the start but I’m horrified to learn this morning that £10.5bn of public money was spent without open competition. From the party that has always

boasted of its careful management of the public finances this is also the height of hypocrisy.

“The whole idea of a ‘fast lane’ also opens the risk of corruption. How could people gain access to this fast lane unless they had contacts with the Conservative party? The fact that there was no transparency or documentation explaining how this fast lane could be accessed adds to the sense of a corrupt process and raises serious concerns about conflicts of interest.”

“We now need a much deeper and wider investigation into why billions in public money was wasted on suppliers with limited experience and totally superfluous middle-men.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.nao.org.uk/report/government-procurement-during-the-covid-19-pandemic/>

2

Green MP Caroline Lucas is part of a legal action to challenge the opaque award of Covid contracts:

<https://goodlawproject.org/update/unpublished-contracts-permission/>

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[Jonathan Bartley responds to government's 10 point climate change plan](#)



Green Party

17 November 2020

Responding to the government's ten point plan for climate change, Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley said:

"Any action to address climate change is welcome, but this is nowhere near the scale or speed of what is needed. It's like dialling 999 when your house is on fire, but Boris Johnson turns up hours late with a garden hose.

"We know that we need to decarbonise every single sector within the next ten years, and also that it is possible. But it will require a fundamental shift in the way our economy works, not a shopping list of policies without any real sense of clear limits or targets. This 10 point plan is essentially business as usual, with a few half-hearted measures and some wishful thinking about pie-in-the-sky technologies such as Jet Zero which don't even exist yet.

"The Government is missing a wide open goal. The Prime Minister is talking of 250,000 jobs, but this is simply not the level of ambition that's required. We should be aiming for millions of Green jobs. This is not only achievable but the best way to address the threat of a deep recession.

"A Green recovery is the best way out of both the climate crisis and the economic challenges that we face right here, right now."

ENDS

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[Green Party sets out five tests for government's 10 point climate change plan](#)



Green Party

17 November 2020

Ahead of the expected publication of the government's long promised ten point plan on the environment, the Green Party sets out five tests for Boris Johnson to meet if the plans are to be welcomed as a serious response to the climate emergency.

Green Party co leader Jonathan Bartley said: "The promise of this ten-point plan represents an important change of emphasis by the government, but years of delay and blocking action means the government is still not on course to meet even its inadequate commitments. We are looking to the Prime Minister to demonstrate that he has grasped the urgency of tackling the climate emergency.

"Boris Johnson can't just say a few warm words on climate to earn himself a cuddly new image after his year of chaos. Over the last nine months we have seen what failure to prepare in the face of an emergency means for the people of the UK and this cannot be allowed to happen when it comes to tackling the climate crisis also.

"That is why, today, I am setting out five principles to follow to make this ten point plan worth the paper it's printed on."

The Green Party's five tests are as follows:

Transform the whole economy

Too often, climate policies from government focus almost exclusively on energy. We need a fundamental reset of the whole economy, decarbonising every sector, ditching high carbon infrastructure projects such as road building and investing instead in projects including nature conservation public transport and walking and cycling infrastructure. The ten point plan must set out how we go net zero across every single sector, including housing, transport and agriculture, without simply relying on the development of new technologies that do not yet exist.

Only provide subsidies for new and emerging clean energy technologies

Subsidising and extracting fossil fuels across the United Kingdom pours petrol on the fire of the climate emergency. The ten point plan must involve a clear transition towards leaving all fossil fuels in the ground and disentangling all of our institutions from oil, gas and coal. Subsidies should solely be used to develop new clean energy, rather than dirty and dangerous sources, including new nuclear, which need to be phased out. The application of such a test would be likely to result in 100% renewable energy.

UK must carry its own net-zero burden

The UK must reach net-zero by its own effort, not by offloading the heavy lifting onto other countries. This means no purchasing of carbon offsets from countries that have made better progress on renewable energy or relying on imported dirty electricity. With our incredible renewable resources we should

aim to be an exporter of clean energy.

Prosperity for all

We can't take action on climate without lifting everybody up. The ten point plan must have a comprehensive Green New Deal and a credible strategy for winding down polluting, outdated sectors, protecting all livelihoods with a basic income and creating millions of good, well-paid Green jobs.

Prioritise the local

Across the world, leadership on moving to net zero has come from local authorities and regional governments. The changes that we need to see must be rapid and have to come from the bottom up. In the UK we have seen this with local authority climate emergency plans. We need government to share the power to tackle climate change with local government and to provide the money and resources for them to take action to deliver on those plans.

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