

'Test and trace has failed': Green Party response to new lockdown measures



Green Party

31 July 2020

The Government has announced new lockdown measures in parts of northern England that bans separate households from meeting at home.

Councillor Andy Fewings, leader of the Green Party Group on Burnley Council, said:

“Test and trace has failed. Announcing major new lockdown measures on Twitter with less than three hours’ notice on the night before Eid is shambolic to say the least, while placing the blame on individuals is nothing short of unforgivable.

“The Government has to take responsibility for its own failings, including its increasingly mixed and confusing messages and a test and trace system that is clearly not fit for purpose.

“The Government must stop blaming communities and start transferring money and responsibility to the local public health teams who are already in place with the necessary expertise and trust within their communities to deliver an effective and transparent test and trace system.”

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Government's cycling plans will need

more funding to see real change – Caroline Russell



Green Party

28 July 2020

The government has announced plans to encourage cycling and walking to be funded by a previously announced £2 billion over five years. [1]

Green Party transport spokesperson Caroline Russell said:

“It’s great to see the new design guidance, proposed Highway Code updates and such enthusiastic government support for protected bike lanes and low traffic neighbourhoods.

“These transformative measures will properly enable people to make local trips safely on foot and by bike. But if we are going to see a measurable change in the way people get around, the government needs to find a lot more than £2billion.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/pm-kickstarts-2bn-cycling-and-walking-revolution>

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Greens in administration in Brighton and Hove City Council following Labour resignations



Green Party

24 July 2020

- **Green Party now in administration in 18 councils across the country**
- **Green group has pledged to focus on helping city through coronavirus crisis**
- **Councillor Phélim Mac Cafferty: “Greens are united in our determination to see the city through our many current challenges and will work with all parties in order to get this achieved”**

The Green Party is now running Brighton and Hove City Council (BHCC) as a minority administration after two Labour resignations tipped the balance of power.[1]

The Greens were left the largest party on the council with 19 councillors after Labour were left with 18 councillors following the resignations.

A motion to transfer power to the Greens was passed at a full council meeting yesterday [Thursday 23 July]. It means the Green Party is now in administration in 18 councils across the country – the highest number in its history.

Councillor Phélim Mac Cafferty has now become the council leader, while Councillor Hannah Clare and Councillor Sue Shanks are deputy leaders.

Caroline Lucas, Green MP for Brighton Pavilion, said:

“This is a critical time for our city which faces a multitude of challenges, among them the impact of Covid-19 on our communities and economy, the desperation of the homeless and the accelerating climate and nature crisis.

“I know Phélim Mac Cafferty and his colleagues will do everything they can to address these and other challenges, and will work tirelessly and cross-party for the good of our amazing city.

“I will continue to press ministers to make good on their promises from the spring to ‘do whatever is necessary to support councils in their response to

coronavirus'. The reality is that BHCC is facing a funding shortfall of as much as £39 million because of the impact of the virus, and the Government's commitment of £500 million shared across more than 360 councils in England and Wales isn't going to do much to close the gap."

Green peer Jenny Jones, Baroness Jones of Moulsecoomb, said:

"I'm delighted that in my home town the Greens have a chance to benefit every community and implement measures that will make a safe and secure future for all.

"This is clearly a difficult time for everybody in Brighton and Hove, but let's hope the whole council pulls together to build back better and ensure we have a green recovery from coronavirus.

"However, with the Greens in control we can be confident that the needs and the well-being of the local community will always be put first during this crisis."

Councillor Mac Cafferty said:

"The Greens are proud to be leading Brighton and Hove City Council and we will do everything in our power to ensure our city and its residents are supported at a time of crisis.

"Now more than ever the people of Brighton and Hove deserve a green recovery from the Covid-19 crisis and we stand fully behind initiatives such as the mass insulation of homes, that will create jobs, reduce emissions and warm peoples' homes.

"We have come into administration when the council's finances are the worst we have ever known them and around the country the outlook for local government has never been bleaker with several councils now on the verge of bankruptcy.

"Residents at this time expect all of us to play our part for the city and we will work cross party where possible when it is in our city's best interests to do so. We are united in our determination to see the city through our many current challenges and will work with all parties in order to get this achieved."

Further details of the group's plans will be unveiled in the coming weeks.

ENDS

Notes

1

A motion to transfer power to the Greens was passed at a full council meeting on Thursday 23 July

<https://new.brighton-hove.gov.uk/news/2020/update-green-administration-bright>

[on-hove-city-council](#)

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[Greens Party motion to demand basic income pilot in Norwich is passed unanimously](#)



Green Party

21 July 2020

Norwich City Council has tonight unanimously passed a Green Party motion calling on the government to trial a fully evaluated basic income in the city in response to the economic shock of the coronavirus crisis.[1]

Leaders of all political parties on Norwich City Council will now write to the Good Economy Commission for Norwich, the secretary of state for Work and Pensions, the Chancellor, the Prime Minister, and all opposition party leaders to ask for a UBI trial in the city of Norwich after passing the motion this evening.

It would mean each citizen in Norwich would receive a monthly income to cover the basic costs of living, regardless of employment status, wealth, or marital status.

This is the first such council motion calling for a trial specifically as response to coronavirus, citing the threat of many Norwich citizens being plunged into poverty, and the shortcomings of Universal Credit.

The last year has seen the number of people claiming the Universal Credit benefit in Norwich more than double, from just over 3,000 in March 2019 to more than 7,200 in March 2020. [2]

Responding to the news the motion had passed, Green Party peer Natalie

Bennett said:

“The economic crisis is only just getting started, but the Government is already turning its back on millions of people. The furlough scheme is winding down, and job losses have started gushing like a burst pipe, with hundreds of livelihoods down the drain every single day.

“We need a universal basic income to ensure that nobody is left high and dry. By ensuring that every single one of us has enough to meet our basic needs, we have a better chance of weathering this storm together.

“The Government should agree to this trial in Norwich so they can see for themselves how effective it will be.”

The council has called for the evaluation of such a trial to look beyond how many people are able to take up paid work as a result, but also to look at the impact on communities, and people’s attitudes towards each other, and their environment.

Norwich Green Party councillor Jamie Osborn said: “I’m delighted that Norwich councillors have today unanimously supported the Green Party proposal for a Universal Basic Income. Even before lockdown I was appalled by the number of people in my ward who were humiliated and excluded by our current benefits system, and that number is only going up.

“But this motion is also about looking longer-term at the kind of society we want. A Universal Basic Income would mean people can spend more time on education and training, or starting their own business, and it would be vital for the arts. With this motion Norwich has recognised the society-wide benefits of a UBI, and we’ll now be working with other local and national organisations to get the Government to listen.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://norwich.greenparty.org.uk/news/2020/07/16/council-could-support-a-universal-basic-income-pilot-in-norwich/>

2

<https://www.eveningnews24.co.uk/news/business/universal-credit-claims-soar-in-coronavirus-lockdown-1-6655681>

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Government should abandon privatised test and trace system following failings – Green Party



Green Party

20 July 2020

- **Greens urge government to instead fund local public health teams who already have expertise and public trust**

The Green Party has urged the government to abandon the privatised test and trace system [1] following reports of a series of serious failings.

Green health spokesperson Larry Sanders has said the money should instead be used to fund locally-based test and trace protection schemes run by local authorities and regional Public Health England teams.

The call follows reports of data breaches within the test and trace system [2] and claims that only half those at risk in towns in the north-west are being contacted [3].

Sanders said:

“It was wholly inappropriate to award this contract to Serco in the first place, particularly when local public health teams were already in place with the necessary expertise and trust within their communities to deliver an effective and transparent test and trace system.

“The failings that are now coming to light show the warnings that were made at the time should have been heeded before lives were put at risk.

“We must be aiming to join the countries which have brought the infection rate to nearly zero, rather than our current position as a country with one of the highest proportional death rates.

“Instead, the privatised system the government has put all of its faith in is deeply flawed and has increased our vulnerability to coronavirus.

“The government must now take urgent action by cancelling Serco’s contract

and backing the local teams who are much better prepared to put in place a comprehensive and safe test and trace system.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jun/06/serco-wins-covid-19-test-and-trace-contract-despite-1m-fine>

2

<https://news.sky.com/story/coronavirus-government-admits-its-test-and-trace-programme-is-unlawful-12032136>

3

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jul/19/test-and-trace-failures-risk-exponential-coronavirus-case-growth-in-england-official-warns>

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