

Green Party calls on companies to put communities and environment ahead of shareholder dividends



Green Party

7 October 2023

*** Shareholder dividends must not be the single most important criterion for company policy making**

*** Companies need to invest profits in transitioning their operations to meet social and environmental objectives**

Companies should be required to put environmental and social priorities ahead of financial returns to shareholders. That is what members at the Green Party's conference in Brighton voted through today.

The motion, that passed with a large majority, makes clear that the right of shareholders to dividends must not be the single most important criterion for company policy making and that all those with a stake in the company's decisions – including workers, consumers, the local community and advocates for the local environment – must have the right to make informed input into those decisions. Similarly, the campaign for the Better Business Act is pushing for a change in UK law to ensure every company in the UK aligns their interests with those of wider society and the environment [1]. They report that 77% in the UK want businesses to be legally responsible for their impact.

Ellie Chowns, Green Party parliamentary candidate in North Herefordshire, said:

"I'm delighted that the Green Party today agreed that the Companies Act 2006 should be amended so that directors of a company must prioritise public well-being and avoid negative environmental and social consequences. This means that companies will need to invest profits in transitioning their operations to meet social and environmental objectives before distributing dividends to shareholders. This is an idea popular with the public and even with many businesses themselves."

"No industry has demonstrated more clearly the need to put environmental and

social priorities ahead of financial returns than the water industry. Since privatisation, this industry has leaked out almost £70bn in dividends to shareholders while it has failed to invest in updating its infrastructure [2]. This has left us with toxic rivers and waterways and sewage contaminated coastlines. If ever an industry needed to put the interests of consumers, local communities and the environment ahead of the financial returns for shareholders, this is it.”

Notes

1. [About The Better Business Act – A Campaign for Better Business](#)
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/dec/01/water-companies-debt-s-since-privatisation-ofwat-refuses-impose-limits>

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“Four for 24”: Only Green MPs will stand up for solutions to UK’s housing crisis



Green Party

6 October 2023

- Greens unveil target candidates for next general election with plan to ensure everybody can afford a quality home
- Fairer, Greener Homes Guarantee will provide funding to help households heat their homes and give renters the right to demand landlords insulate their homes
- Carla Denyer: “We think everyone deserves a warm, secure and affordable home”
- Adrian Ramsay: “Only by having more Green MPs will we have people in Parliament advocating the solutions to the country’s housing crisis”

The co-leaders of the Green Party today (Friday 6 October) officially unveiled the next generation of Green MPs alongside their plan to ensure everybody can afford to live in a quality home.

In a keynote speech at the party's Autumn Conference in Brighton, (Friday 6 October) [1], co-leaders Carla Denyer and Adrian Ramsay set out their ambitious plan to quadruple Green representation in Parliament after the next general election.

They said the party's four target candidates [2] will hold the next government to account and push for their Fairer, Greener Homes Guarantee – a policy package designed to ensure everybody has access to a warm, secure home.

Denyer said:

“We think everyone deserves a warm, secure and affordable home. That's how to build stronger communities and better lives for all.

“Yet successive governments have left a generation of renters unable to put down lasting roots because they can't afford to get on the housing ladder – can't even touch the first rung.

“The broken housing market leaves people much less likely to feel at home where they live – it's hard to prioritise building relationships with your neighbours and local shop owners when you know you could get evicted with barely a moment's notice.

“And too many private landlords in England are lining their pockets despite a quarter of privately rented homes not even meeting the most basic standards of decency.

“So as part of our promise for Fairer, Greener Homes for all, we are announcing a package of policies to make every house – and flat, and bedsit – a proper home.

“Every home should be properly insulated and free from damp and mould. We'd give renters the legal right to demand this from their landlords. No more battling to get things done and no more risk that you'll get kicked out for insisting your home meets basic standards.

“And we want the amount of rent you pay to be fair, so we'd give councils the power to bring the cost of renting in line with local wages, and make sure housing benefit is enough too. No more lying awake at night worrying your landlord's going to price you out of your home.

“That's our promise to everyone – a home that's warm, affordable and secure.”

The Fairer, Greener Homes Guarantee also includes:

- Investment of £145 billion over ten years to provide grants to retrofit all homes that need it, along with government-backed property-linked finance [3] to make up additional costs
- Give local authorities the power to impose rents controls on the private rental sector ensuring there are affordable homes for key and critical workers in overheated local housing markets
- Plans to increase the stock of social housing by 150,000 homes a year

including by bringing empty homes back into use

Co-leader Adrian Ramsay said:

“The other political parties are simply not living in the real world when it comes to dealing with the housing crisis while reaching the critical net zero target.

“The Conservatives are capitulating to developers while Labour still supports the highly damaging Right to Buy [4] which helped create the crisis.

“This is why it is so crucial that we achieve our aim of Four for 24 – the next generation of Green MPs, our four target candidates, elected at the next election.

“Only by having more Green MPs will we have people in Parliament advocating the solutions to the country’s housing crisis.”

ENDS

Notes

1 The Green Party Autumn Conference takes place at The Brighton Centre, in Brighton, from Friday 6 October to Sunday 8 October

2 The party’s four target candidates are:

- Siân Berry, in Brighton Pavilion
- Carla Denyer, in Bristol Central
- Adrian Ramsay, in Waveney Valley
- Ellie Chowns, in North Herefordshire

3 Low interest government backed loans to pay for retrofit not covered by government grants. These loans will be linked to the property, not the owner at the time that retrofitting took place. Homeowners will need to pay off the loan while they live there and benefit from the reduced energy bills.

Tenants will be able to insist their landlord accesses the loans and has the work carried out. If the landlord will not do this, the local authority can receive the loan and their local authorities carry out the work.

4 <https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/news/labour-party-supports-right-to-buy-to-extend-wealth-ownership-nandy-says-82109>

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Caroline Lucas condemns approval of Rosebank oil field



Green Party

27 September 2023

- **“This Government must be held accountable for its complicity in this climate crime”**

Caroline Lucas, Green Party MP for Brighton Pavilion, has the following response to the approval of the Rosebank oil field:

“Giving the green light to this huge new oil field is morally obscene. This Government must be held accountable for its complicity in this climate crime.

Amidst a summer of raging wildfires and the hottest July on record, this Government approves the biggest undeveloped oil and gas field in the North Sea – set to produce more than the combined CO2 emissions of all 28 low-income countries in the world.

Energy security and cheaper bills aren’t delivered by allowing highly-subsidised, foreign-owned fossil fuel giants to extract more oil and gas from these islands and sell it overseas to the highest bidder.

They come from grasping the opportunities of unblocking and upscaling abundant and affordable renewables, and properly insulating the nation – ensuring clean air and water, thriving nature and wildlife, and high-quality skilled and stable jobs in the process.

If we’re going to secure this liveable future, we must stop all new fossil fuel projects like Rosebank once and for all.”

ENDS

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Greens call for Braverman sacking



Green Party

26 September 2023

Responding to Suella Braverman's US speech [1], Green Party co-leader Adrian Ramsay said:

"This is a horrifying speech from a British Home Secretary that would not be out of place on a far-right conspiracy website.

"It is language straight out of the gutter that should have no place in a fair and compassionate society.

"The Prime Minister should have the decency and moral courage to sack the Home Secretary now.

"Suella Braverman has singled out gay people seeking asylum despite the fact they make up around 1.5 per cent of applications and come mostly from countries where being openly gay can lead to a lifetime in prison or even a death sentence.

"She claims that so-called uncontrolled and illegal migration is an 'existential challenge for the political and cultural institutions of the West', when our country draws its strength from the diversity offered by centuries of migrants sharing their skills and experiences and building lives here.

"The international refugee convention has proved a cornerstone of protection for people around the world and serves as a reminder to every country of our shared obligations.

"We need a government that recognises its international responsibilities and sits down with its neighbours to work out how to create the safe, legal routes that enable people to seek asylum without risking their lives."

Notes

1. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/live/uk-politics-66922119>

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Conservative inaction fuelling economic crisis, Greens warn



Green Party

21 September 2023

Responding to the news that the Bank of England has held interest rates at 5.25%, Green Party co-leader Carla Denyer said:

“Today’s decision to hold interest rates will come as some relief to households who have been finding it hard to make ends meet over the last couple of years.

“However, keeping the base rate at 5.25% will do nothing to actually help those who are struggling as a result of this Conservative government’s complete and utter inaction in the face of an economic crisis.

“It’s clear the Bank of England feels it has been left with no option but to use the blunt instrument of rising interest rates over the last few months, and risk recession, due to the fact that the Chancellor and Prime Minister see no need to do anything to help those who need it right now.

“It is clear as day that these two millionaires simply cannot see the devastating impact the current economic climate is having on millions of households.

“What we need to do is look for ways to support the economy without fuelling inflation by shifting consumption from the wealthy to those on lower incomes.

‘This means paying public sector workers in line with inflation and funding this through taxing the super-rich. Shifting spending power in this way would reduce any potential consumption impact on inflation without piling pressure on the struggling majority.

“It is the companies currently making billions in profits and the most wealthy who can and should bear the burden of a crisis rooted in inequality.

“At the same time, an increase in Universal Credit of £40 per week, and the same for legacy benefits, would provide immediate support to those that need

it right now.”

ENDS

For more information or to arrange an interview contact the press office on press@greenparty.org.uk or call 0203 691 9401

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