

Government needs to “get serious about reducing traffic levels” following latest Active Travel funding announcement



Green Party

4 January 2023

The Green Party has said the latest government announcement of £32.9 million to create a national network of walking and cycling experts [1] doesn't come close to delivering the active travel revolution we need.

The funding announced this week aims to support local authorities to enhance their technical skills so that high-quality schemes can be delivered which make it easier and safer for hundreds of thousands more people to walk and cycle.

Green Party transport spokesperson and Leader of the Green Party Group on Bradford Council, Matt Edwards, said:

“It is always welcome to see new funding to help develop world class active travel networks across England. Active Travel England wants 50% of trips in England's urban areas to be walked, cycled or made by other active travel means by 2030 [2].

“However, this goal is being undermined whilst our local Councils continue to treat active travel as an afterthought. Retraining staff is a good place to start but the government needs to be much more ambitious.

“£33 million is a drop in the ocean when you consider the billions in the Department of Transport budget – £16 billion alone is allocated to just five road building schemes [3].

“Training new teams of experts is pointless without the funding to deliver the programme of schemes we need. The government needs to follow through and get serious about reducing traffic levels and boosting active travel by switching the billions earmarked for building new roads into investing in healthy walking, cycling and other forms of active travel.”

Notes

1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/329-million-to-create-a-national-network-of-walking-and-cycling-experts>
2. <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/active-travel-england/about>
3. <https://transportactionnetwork.org.uk/campaign/scrap-road-schemes-to-grow-economy/>

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[Greens urge UK to step up action on biodiversity loss after COP15 deal announced](#)



Green Party

19 December 2022

The Green Party has welcomed the deal to halt biodiversity loss announced at the UN's COP15 summit in Canada today [1], but warned the UK government and others must now step up to the plate to make the promises a reality.

Green Party co-leader Carla Denyer said:

“Now that we have reached this point, it is vital that governments step up with the money and the plans to not only halt the destruction of Earth's ecosystems but actually restore the natural world we all depend upon.

“Here in the UK, we have one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world, yet the government has made no progress on its own commitment to restore 30% of land for nature by 2030 [2]. Instead, it has gone in the wrong direction with its foolish and short-sighted attacks on the natural world that have rightly been condemned by charities [3].

“With this international deal now in place, it is incumbent on the UK government to start taking the necessary action on the ecological emergency which currently poses real threats to human society – to food and water

supplies, to clean air, to our ability to adapt to a warming world.

“This starts with richer nations contributing money and resources to start taking action to deliver on this deal – as many of the world’s most important countries for biodiversity are also some of the poorest. But it also requires serious attention to the biodiversity loss here in the UK.

“If the government wants to demonstrate a genuine commitment to halting and reversing species decline, it will show leadership by introducing a Rights of Nature Act [4]. This would provide legal protections for wildlife and habitats in England and Wales and be enforced by an independent Commission for Nature. It would also ensure that the regeneration of nature is at the heart of all policy considerations.

“The government must also immediately stop dragging its feet on introducing the promised nature-friendly farming payments scheme, publish a clear pathway to meet its commitment to restore 30% of land for nature by 2030 and scrap plans to weaken protections for nature in the Retained EU Law (revocation and reform) Bill.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/science-environment-64019324>

2

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/nov/28/tories-embarrassingly-poor-nature-targets-2030-labour-says>

3

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/rspb-england-government-national-trust-wildlife-trusts-b2174501.html>

4

<https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2021/10/23/green-party-backs-a-rights-of-nature-act-to-give-nature-legal-rights/>

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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Adrian Ramsay makes key demands on UK government during visit to Suffolk nature reserve



Green Party

9 December 2022

Green Party co-leader Adrian Ramsay has made a series of key demands of Environment Secretary Thérèse Coffey during a visit to a nature reserve in her Suffolk constituency today [Friday] which sits in the shadow of the planned Sizewell C nuclear power plant.

Ramsay visited the important RSPB Minsmere site while politicians from around the world attended the UN COP15 biodiversity summit in Montreal. He called on the Environment Secretary to show international leadership on the issue, starting with fully reversing the government's attacks on nature.

Ramsay has called on the government to:

- Publish a clear pathway to meet its commitment to restore 30% of land for nature by 2030
- To scrap plans to weaken protections for nature in the Retained EU Law (revocation and reform) Bill
- Stop dragging its feet on introducing the promised nature-friendly farming payments scheme

Ramsay, who is standing as a parliamentary candidate for the Greens in Suffolk at the next general election, said:

“The government's attacks on nature have rightly been very strongly challenged by the RSPB, the Wildlife Trusts, the National Trust and others. The UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world. Protecting and restoring nature is deeply important to people in Thérèse Coffey's constituency and around the country. During the biodiversity COP, the Environment Secretary must rethink the government's approach and show

international leadership on this crucial issue.

“Minsmere is a great example of rich and varied landscapes, managed carefully by the RSPB to ensure that the huge variety of wildlife survives and thrives. Yet this site, within the environment secretary’s constituency, is under threat from the Sizewell C nuclear power plant [2], which was given the go ahead by the government last week. Meanwhile the government’s weak and harmful policies are failing to prevent and reverse further declines in wildlife and nature at sites across the country.

“That’s why the Green Party is calling for the government to immediately stop dragging its feet on introducing the promised nature-friendly farming payments scheme, publish a clear pathway to meet its commitment to restore 30% of land for nature by 2030 and scrap plans to weaken protections for nature in the Retained EU Law (revocation and reform) Bill.”

Earlier in the week the Green Party also called on the government to introduce a Rights of Nature Act to extend legal protections for wildlife and habitats in England and Wales, and establish an independent Commission for Nature to oversee the Act’s enforcement [3].

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/reserves-and-events/reserves-a-z/minsmere/>

2

<https://www.rspb.org.uk/our-work/casework/cases/sizewell-c/>

3

<https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2022/12/07/greens-call-to-extend-legal-protections-for-wildlife/>

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[Cumbria coal mine decision shows](#)

“government is the pits” on tackling the climate crisis



Green Party

7 December 2022

Commenting on Levelling-Up Secretary Michael Gove’s go ahead for the Cumbria coal mine, Green Party of England and Wales co-leader Adrian Ramsay said:

“It’s a disgrace that this decision has been cynically delayed until just after we have ceased to hold the COP Presidency. This government really is the pits.

“England and Wales have huge natural advantages and the economic strength to harness renewable wind, wave and solar power. The government should be leading the world toward renewable forms of energy not encouraging it to move backwards.

“The government’s environmental credentials are in tatters. Around the world, countries are striving to tackle the climate crisis by closing coal mines, yet here the government is opening one.

“This latest decision follows the green light for new North Sea oil and gas licences.

“Global leadership must begin at home and we need to see a clear commitment from this government to keep fossil fuels in the ground. This means no new fossil fuel mining and a clear pathway to move rapidly away from oil, coal and gas in favour of renewables and a nationwide programme of home insulation to cut both emissions and energy bills.

“The mine will not be ‘carbon neutral’ as previously claimed and its coking coal is not essential to the future of steel production. At most, only 13 per cent of the coal from this mine is destined for the UK market [1]. The rest will be exported.

“Steel production is currently one of our most carbon intensive industries. That has to change and the companies themselves know it. Low carbon production technology exists and should be encouraged by government, not held back by creating new sources of dirty fuels.

“There is no doubt West Cumbria needs jobs but over-promising in order to

open a new coal mine is not the answer. There needs to be investment in the green technologies that will create the sustainable jobs of the future.”

Jill Perry, Green Party councillor on the Shadow Authority of Cumberland Council and long-term campaigner against the coal mine, said:

“This is really bad news for local people, because what we really need are green jobs that benefit everyone in the community, not dirty jobs in an old industry where the profits are sucked out and hidden in tax havens.

“If we invest in retrofit of insulation and renewable technologies in our leaky housing stock, a lot of which isn’t even on the gas network, it will provide more jobs, cheaper heating bills and keep the money circulating in the local area.

“The steel industry doesn’t need this coking coal plant and neither do we.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://theecologist.org/2022/dec/01/cumbrian-coal-mine-decision-imminent>

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[UK transport falling behind – we need legislation to “get Britain moving”, say Greens](#)



Green Party

7 December 2022

The Green Party has accused the government of leaving transport “in a mess” by refusing to tackle key issues after the Transport Secretary says there is no time for new legislation in this parliament.

The statement was made at the Transport Select Committee [1] where he also suggested that the government could cancel plans for Great British Railways.

Councillor Matt Edwards, the Green Party transport spokesperson said.

“It’s frankly astonishing that the British government is looking at the state of our railways and thinking that there is no problem to solve here.

“Privatisation on our railways has been a disaster and the creation of Great British Railways was meant to better coordinate all aspects of services including the planning of engineering works on the network.

“Years of underinvestment and lack of direction have meant that the railways, particularly in the North of England, are past breaking point. The government can’t keep looking for ‘alternative views’ when the common sense approach doesn’t fit with their extreme market-led ideology.”

Greens also say that legislation is needed to finally address the legal situation with other pressing issues including pavement parking. Parking on the pavement is only illegal in London, but a new ban has been promised for years and would cover the whole of England.

Councillor Edwards said,

“I know the impact the delay on legislation around pavement parking is having, particularly on disabled people and parents with prams and pushchairs. The law is complicated and in many cases people are left with neither local authorities nor the police willing to tackle problems.

“The job of government is to govern. We need new legislation to fix all the loopholes in our laws and get Britain moving. But the government seems determined to avoid taking any responsibility for anything.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/20875a20-10d7-4d50-868a-d1f6b8776b14>

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