

Government's railway plans are not "levelling up", say Greens



Green Party

17 November 2021

Greens say the Government's announcements on rail for the North and Midlands, expected tomorrow, demonstrate a lack of strategic planning on public transport.

In response to indications that the eastern leg of HS2 from Birmingham to Leeds will be scrapped in favour of upgrading existing lines, Green Party co-leader Carla Denyer said,

"The Green Party has opposed the expensive HS2 project, while calling for investment in local and regional transport infrastructure, particularly in the North, Midlands and South West of England.[1]

"It now looks like the UK is being left with the expensive and most ecologically damaging first phase of HS2, which risks turning Birmingham into part of the London commuter belt, without any of the originally touted benefits of providing better connections in the North of England. I am worried that this announcement is the worst of both worlds."

At the same time as announcing upgrades to existing lines, the Government is expected to scrap Northern Powerhouse Rail, backtracking on promises made for cities and towns in the North.

Bradford Green Party councillor Matt Edwards said, "The effective cancellation of Northern Powerhouse Rail means that our cities in the North, especially places like Bradford, Liverpool, and Hull are getting left behind again. This isn't leveling up, it is another betrayal of people in the North."

Greens are now calling for the improvements to existing local railway lines that will replace the eastern leg of HS2 to be integrated into a wider strategy for transport in this climate emergency.

Carla Denyer added,

"Greens have long called for improvements to journey times, frequencies and capacity of rail services in all regions of England and in Wales. [1] But a

transport revolution to tackle the climate crisis and air pollution must also focus on less glamorous localised investments, particularly in infrastructure to make cycling and walking safer and more convenient, and in frequent and affordable local bus services.”

ENDS

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[1] The Green Party’s 2019 manifesto states: ‘Creating a new golden age of train by opening new rail connections that remove bottlenecks, increase rail freight capacity, improve journey times and frequencies, enhance capacity in the South West, Midlands and North, and connect currently unconnected urban areas.’

[Back to main news page](#)

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[Greens call for UK ‘climate crisis cabinet’ to push through urgent climate action](#)



Green Party

15 November 2021

- **Adrian Ramsay: “The UK must use its continuing COP presidency to show global leadership, but we can only do that if we are setting an example ourselves here at home.”**

A “climate crisis cabinet” must be convened immediately to push through significant climate action here in the UK in the wake of the failure of negotiations at COP26, the Green Party has said.

Following the announcement of the final deal from the UN climate summit in Glasgow on Saturday [1], the Greens were clear that the agreement had failed to reach anywhere near the progress needed to keep 1.5°C in reach [2]

But despite disappointment and frustration at the missed opportunity, they have said there is still a chance to strengthen the limited COP26 outcomes, as the UK holds the presidency for a further year.

Green Party co-leader Adrian Ramsay said:

“There is a huge task ahead to salvage the weak agreement reached in Glasgow. The UK must use its continuing COP presidency – up until November 2022 – to show global leadership. But we can only do that if we are setting an example ourselves here at home.’

“That’s why we’re calling on the government to convene a UK ‘climate crisis cabinet’ now, to get our domestic house in order so we can show, not just tell, our global counterparts the level of action that’s required. This action must help us prepare for the changes to the climate that are already baked in as well as avoiding the worst effects of the climate crisis.

“We need the UK government to lead the way and put us on an emergency footing by creating a diverse ‘climate crisis cabinet’ to put us on the path to a Green New Deal.” [3]

Greens say the climate crisis cabinet should take advice from a range of climate experts and representatives from the Global South that are most affected by climate change. It would then assign specific targets to key ministers with monthly reporting on progress to achieve them. The climate crisis cabinet would also be expected to follow the recommendations of the Climate Assembly, which reported in September 2020 [4].

As a minimum Greens call for six measures to be agreed and pushed through by the climate crisis cabinet as a matter of priority:

- Oversee a commitment to spend £100 billion a year for a decade on a Green New Deal to transform our society and economy for a green future. A carbon tax would both generate funds to help pay for this and hold polluters to account for their emissions.
- A commitment to introduce a ‘climate test’ for all government projects leading to the scrapping of those incompatible with urgent climate action. This means no £27bn road building project, no more airport expansion and no additional oil, gas and coal.
- Task the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) with an urgent review of ongoing and proposed fossil fuel subsidies with a view to immediately ending them.
- Immediately reverse the cut to the UK’s overseas aid budget and secure funding for climate reparations, in recognition of the harm already caused by the climate crisis, and to compensate countries in the Global South for the loss and damage caused by the changing climate and build a

green economy for the future.

- Commit the UK to the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty [5].
- Sign up to the Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance – an international coalition of governments led by Denmark and Costa Rica and stakeholders working to facilitate the managed phase-out of oil and gas production [6].

Ramsay continued: “As well as putting pressure on the government to take this immediate, critical action, in the wake of COP failure we will be working harder than ever to get more Greens elected and support the work of communities, business and organisations to effect change on the ground. This is the crucial decade to stop catastrophic climate change and we cannot let a lack of leadership at COP26 stop us in our tracks now.”

Notes

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2021/nov/13/cop26-countries-agree-to-accept-imperfect-climate-agreement>
2. <https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2021/11/12/green-party-sets-out-five-tests-for-cop26-agreement/>
3. <https://campaigns.greenparty.org.uk/manifesto/>
4. <https://www.parliament.uk/get-involved/committees/climate-assembly-uk/>
5. <https://fossilfuel treaty.org/>
6. <https://beyondoilandgasalliance.com/>

[Back to main news page](#)

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[COP26 agreement fails key climate tests but there is hope to salvage summit's legacy, says Green Party](#)



Green Party

14 November 2021

COP26 has failed to deliver action either at the scale, or with the urgency needed to curb the worst impacts of climate change, the Green Party has said.

As the final agreement was passed this evening the Green Party expressed deep regret that the conference had failed in its primary objective of getting the world on track to limit temperature rise to 1.5C. In spite of the huge energy from activists in Glasgow and appetite for change from communities worldwide, the final agreement clearly fails to meet the five tests the Green Party had set. [1]

Green Party co-leader Adrian Ramsay said:

“This agreement has failed to get us on track to 1.5C, the primary aim of this summit, and is woefully short on providing support to the Global South, protecting future generations or safeguarding the natural world.

“While the deal for the first time acknowledges the central role of fossil fuels as causing the climate crisis, and the loss and damage agenda is finally being taken seriously, like so many others who have campaigned so long for climate justice, we are left with a sense of grief and anxiety about what has been agreed overall.

“Our five tests were designed to highlight the absolute essentials we needed to see from this agreement and unfortunately they have simply not been delivered: every test has been failed.”

How has the COP26 agreement failed the Green Party’s five tests?

1 It is unacceptable that the agreement has failed to outlaw offsetting as part of the measurement of carbon reporting from governments and industries. We deplore the fact that it is now possible for countries to offload the heavy lifting of CO2 reductions onto other countries or to gain ‘carbon credit’ via initiatives like tree planting as an alternative to real cuts in emissions. This could lead to high-emitting countries, companies and individuals exploiting the environments of low-income countries in a way that is the precise opposite of climate justice.

2 While the deal recognises the importance of loss and damage, negotiators have only taken the first steps towards an agreement at a time when countries are already being devastated and lives being lost because of the impact of

the climate crisis. There is still no money on the table and no clarity around the need for countries to pay reparations for past damage. It is deeply unfair that money will be transferred in the form of loans rather than grants for countries that are already over-burdened with debt.

3 While the core demand to reduce the global use of fossil fuels has been kept in the text, a last minute change to 'phase down' rather than phase out coal is a dangerous dilution that puts 1.5 further beyond reach. There is no such thing as an efficient fossil fuel subsidy and abatement for coal is a loophole that only serves to extend the life of this most polluting form of energy.

4 The agreement fails to compel countries to introduce carbon pricing to make polluters pay for the impact of their emissions. Yet again we see an agreement strong on pledges and promises but vacuous when it comes to policy tools.

5 Given the weakness of this agreement, an annual check in on nationally determined contributions is essential. Our test required annual checks based on scientifically verifiable evidence. This agreement lacks the sense of urgency around action this decade and without scientific monitoring or enforcement could become as worthless as the paper it is written on.

Ramsay went on to say: "Although this is a colossal disappointment and a wasted opportunity, we're adamant that the legacy of this COP doesn't need to be failure.

"This generation of politicians is failing us, but we are determined that the amazing energy shown by youth activists, indigenous people and citizens from around the world will not be betrayed.

"As Greens we have been at the forefront of the struggle for climate justice for decades, and we will continue to be the political voice in that struggle as it continues."

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2021/11/12/green-party-sets-out-five-tests-for-cop26-agreement/>

[Back to main news page](#)

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Green Party

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[Back to main news page](#)

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[Back to main news page](#)

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