

'Destructive' Investment Zones will fail to create fairer greener communities



6 October 2022

Green councillors across England and Wales are urging their councils to reject 'Investment Zones', which are a core element in the Conservatives' 'Growth Plan.[1]' Greens say the plans, which aim to accelerate housing and infrastructure through a new streamlined planning system, threaten both local democracy and the environment [2].

Green Party co-leader Adrian Ramsay said:

"Investment zones, as set out by the government, threaten to ride rough-shod over agreed local priorities, further damage the environment and nature, and reduce commitments to affordable homes and community facilities.

"By offering a liberalised planning process with tax breaks, this is a developers charter, that will mean local communities lose their rights to resist unsustainable development and allow developers to by-pass local objections entirely.

"The guidance wants to remove current legal requirements which provide the key tools for protecting nature during the planning process. Even worse, it suggests Investment Zones could be allowed in National Parks, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and other protected environments. The legal requirement to achieve Net Zero by 2050 has also been completely ignored.

"As Greens we urge local councils to take a stand: to refuse to agree to a new streamlined overarching planning system; to make clear their commitment to local control of planning, and insist existing protections for the environment and for nature are retained.

"We do urgently need investment in our local communities. But Greens have a very different vision of how we can create prosperity.

"We desperately need to insulate our homes and workplaces, provide clean and cheap renewable energy, improve public transport, produce healthy local food and help nature thrive. We also need serious investment in our crumbling health and social care services. All of which will help create thousands of new jobs.

"We understand the desperate need many councils have for investment and funding. But we will resist harmful Investment Zones and continue to fight for fairer, greener communities."

Notes

1. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/investment-zones-in-england-expression-of-interest>
2. <https://www.wcl.org.uk/open-letter-to-pm-on-environmental-deregulation.aspx>

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