

Green policies are a breath of fresh air: Party commits to a Clean Air Act on Clean Air Day

To mark Clean Air Day the Green Party has committed to introducing a Clean Air Act as part of their manifesto commitments, which would set new air quality standards for the UK and enshrine the right to breathe clean air in law.

Greens point to a host of transport policies that would help rid cities of toxic air, including:

- Investing £2.5 billion a year on new cycleways and footpaths
- Adopting Travel England's aim for 50% of trips in towns and cities to be walked, wheeled or cycled
- Empowering local authorities to provide the bus services communities need and ensuring they have the funding to do so
- Ending the sale of new petrol and diesel vehicles by 2027 and their use entirely by 2035, together with an extensive vehicle scrappage scheme to help people make the switch to cleaner vehicles.

Co-leader Carla Denyer said:

"Toxic air affects many communities in towns and cities across the country. It's high time we cleaned up our act. That's why Green MPs will take our manifesto commitment to a Clean Air Act and push the next Labour government to give everyone the legal right to breathe clean air.

"Green policies are a breath of fresh air. We propose a series of sensible and achievable policies.

"Creating safe routes for walking, wheeling and cycling will encourage many more people to use active travel, especially children, so that these become healthy lifetime habits.

"Frequent, reliable, affordable and electrified buses also have a huge role to play in offering a viable alternative to the car. Not only will this clean up our air, it will be good for the economy. Every £1 invested in bus services is estimated to bring an economic return of £4.50. Greens also want to see free bus travel for under-18s.

"We also need to tackle the main cause of the air pollution in our towns and cities. Which is why Greens want to see an end to the sale of petrol and diesel cars by 2027 and the introduction of an extensive vehicle scrappage scheme to help people make the switch to cleaner vehicles."

In the previous parliament Green MP Caroline Lucas and Green peer Jenny Jones

worked tirelessly to push a Clean Air Bill, also known as Ella's Law, which received strong cross-party support [3].

Denyer concluded:

“Air pollution is linked to 43,000 deaths per year in the UK. The World Health Organization recognises it's the largest environmental threat to our health. On Clean Air Day we owe it to the many communities blighted by toxic air to fix this problem.

“Greens offer these communities real hope and real change and Green MPs will work hard for a Clean Air Act in the next parliament.”

Notes

1. <https://www.actionforcleanair.org.uk/campaigns/clean-air-day>
2. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/article/2024/jun/14/children-near-amsterdam-airport-inhalers-study>
3. <https://ellaslaw.uk/2022/12/13/leading-mps-sign-early-day-motion-in-support-of-ellas-law/>

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