

Greens call for emergency intervention into air pollution crisis



Green Party

3 May 2017

The Green Party is calling for an emergency intervention into the air pollution crisis ahead of the publication of the Government's draft air quality plan [1].

Jonathan Bartley, Green Party co-leader, spoke at an assembly at a London school this morning and called on the Government to clean up the UK's filthy air, which is linked to 40,000 early deaths every year.

The demand comes as new figures reveal the cost of taking a bus, coach and train has soared while the cost of travelling by car has dropped dramatically between 1980 and 2016 [2].

The cost of motoring, including purchasing a vehicle, has fallen by 20% since 1980, while rail fares have risen by 63% and bus and coach fares are up by 64%.

The High Court ruled on Thursday (April 27) that the Government must publish its draft air pollution plan before May 9 [3].

Bartley said:

"It's astounding the Government had to be forced to reveal its plan for tackling air pollution and squandered taxpayers' money fighting to keep it a secret. Our filthy air is linked to the early deaths of 40,000 people every year and any delay in tackling this crisis is unacceptable.

"The stark difference between the cost of travelling by car and taking public transport lays bare how little this Government cares about tackling the problem at its root. If we keep pushing people into cars instead of promoting rail and public transport, our air is only going to get dirtier and harder for our children to breathe.

"The Green Party is the only party committed to taking immediate action on air pollution, with investment in cycling, walking, electric vehicles and public transport. We'd also properly fund and expand the Clean Air Zone network and introduce a Vehicle Excise Duty for new diesel vehicles alongside

a diesel scrappage scheme.”

Notes:

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/may/02/uk-government-publish-air-pollution-strategy>

2. <http://www.parliament.uk/business/publications/written-questions-answers-statements/written-question/Commons/2017-04-25/718544/>

3. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/apr/27/air-pollution-plan-election-campaign-bomb-court-government>

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