

The north must benefit from HS2 say Greens

Delegates at Green Party conference in Manchester have voted for HS2 to be funded and completed in full, including the entire Eastern leg and an underground through station at Manchester Piccadilly. The policy development comes as phase one of HS2 between London and Birmingham is well under construction.

Commenting on the revised Green Party policy, co-leader Carla Denyer MP, said:

“The Green Party has long supported the principle of a new north-south high-speed rail line but had serious concerns about the specific route of HS2 and the environmental impacts of this route.

“However, this first phase of HS2 between London and Birmingham is well under way and most of the environmental impacts of construction are already baked in. So this is a pragmatic decision by the Green Party. It moves us on.

“Crucially, we have also acknowledged that the northern leg of HS2 was always the most important in terms of tackling capacity issues on our railways as well as addressing regional inequalities. So the line must be completed in full.

“We also say loud and clear that our railways have to be built right – for habitats and wildlife, for local transport users, for affected neighbours and for government coffers. Greens will not support blank cheques or offer uncritical endorsement.

“We need to move at great speed to shift travel away from cars and flights to public transport. HS2, in full, can play an important role in achieving this shift.”

Green Party spokesperson on transport Councillor Matt Edwards, who is leader of the Green Group on Bradford Council, added:

“I am delighted that the Green Party conference has also backed Northern Powerhouse Rail, a high-speed rail line from Liverpool to Manchester and onwards to Bradford and Leeds and then the east coast. Successive governments have failed to invest in the rail network in the North of England and the Green Party have long advocated for the investment communities in the North deserve.

“Pollution and carbon emissions from transport remains stubbornly high. If we want to do something to address this, we need to invest in high-speed rail – but it has to be done right. Putting passengers and our planet at the heart of the project.”

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[Greens vote to oppose introduction of Freeports in the UK](#)

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The Green Party has voted to oppose the introduction of Freeports and Special Economic Zones across the United Kingdom at its annual party conference in Manchester.

Commenting Green Party Co-Leader Adrian Ramsay said: “There is no place for Freeports or Special Economic Zones in the United Kingdom. Their introduction will only serve to displace economic activity from elsewhere whilst reducing tax revenue that is so desperately needed for our broken public services. The lack of transparency in decision making and reductions in environmental, planning and employment legislation are all factors that should alarm every UK citizen.”

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[Green Party conference votes to ban greyhound racing](#)

2. [Press Releases](#)

At their conference in Manchester, Green delegates today voted to support an immediate ban on greyhound racing and the use of the whip in horse racing. This is alongside a high compulsory levy to be imposed on all betting, to be used solely for welfare improvements, and a single regulatory authority to enforce animal welfare standards.

Co-leader Adrian Ramsay said:

“We are the first party to pledge to ban greyhound racing, a position supported by the RSPCA, Dog’s Trust, Blue Cross, and a majority of the public.

“Preventing greyhounds from being raced for the benefit of the betting industry and commercial gain would bring an end to the unnecessary deaths and suffering of these dogs.

“Approximately 200 horses die every year from horse racing [2]. Banning the use of the whip is a basic step for animal welfare. Equally the horse racing industry needs to answer how it will stop the shocking number of deaths it’s industry causes that no one wants to see.

“These measures would also help reduce the harm caused by problem gambling.”

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[Greens castigate the Taliban’s treatment of women as a ‘crime against humanity’](#)

2. [Press Releases](#)

At its party conference in Manchester, the Greens have voted to support United Nations experts’ calls for the Taliban’s treatment of women to be recognised as a gender apartheid under international law and as a crime against humanity.

The party endorsed Amnesty International’s demands of the UK government to:

- Consult with women-led organisations in Afghanistan
- Support Afghan women’s rights activists
- Ensure that protecting women’s rights is non-negotiable with the Taliban
- Provide safe passage for Afghan women and girls seeking asylum in the UK.

Green Party co-leader Carla Denyer said:

“Since the Taliban’s 2021 takeover of Afghanistan, women have been systematically erased from society, being ordered against leaving their homes without a male relative, banned from secondary education, and banned from working in most sectors.

“Last month, women were ordered to cover their entire bodies in public, banned from looking directly at men they are not related to, and banned from speaking in public. This is a humanitarian crisis, and the Green Party stands in solidarity with the 14 million women and girls trapped in this brutal gender apartheid.”

“Although the UK government does not recognise the Taliban as the legitimate government of Afghanistan, through the UK Mission to Afghanistan we have a unique opportunity to advocate for Afghan women. We must use this opportunity to provide both support for women-led organisations in Afghanistan and those seeking asylum.”

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[Greens call for clear regulatory framework for AI](#)

2. [Press Releases](#)

The Green Party has adopted new policy at its Manchester Autumn conference calling for a clear regulatory framework that will drive the development and uses of AI in ways that put the interests of people and planet first.

This includes the appointment of an Ombudsman to champion the rights of individuals and groups in the coming AI revolution, and certification of energy and water consumption to force improvements in these areas.

Proposer, Graham Tavener said: “The likely impact of AI on our lives now, and in the near future, demands serious and urgent action.

“AI should be of great benefit, but there are risks too. We need regulation now to control its potential to take over our lives.”

Green MP Carla Denyer said: “The government needs to be pushed to get ahead of the rapid development of AI so it is democratically regulated.

“We need to prohibit certain uses of AI by law, including lethal autonomous weapons systems. We also need a regulator with the powers to ensure workers’ rights and interests are respected when AI leads to significant changes in working conditions.”

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