

Greens lead the call for local authorities to be given representation at COP26



Green Party

6 July 2021

- LGA to call on Government for “adequate representation” for local authorities at COP26
- Motion at General Assembly proposed by Councillor Phelim MacCafferty, Green Party leader of Brighton and Hove City Council
- Councillor Phelim Mac Cafferty said: “It’s essential that local councils have a seat at the table in Glasgow for COP26”

The leader of Brighton and Hove Council, Green Party councillor Phelim Mac Cafferty has today (July 6) successfully passed a motion at the Local Government Association General Assembly calling on the Government to ensure that there is “adequate representation” for local authorities at COP26. [1]

The motion was seconded by other Green Party councillors Cllr Siriol Hugh-Jones also of Brighton & Hove City Council, Cllr Julian Dean of Shropshire Council and Cllr Scott Ainslie of Lambeth Council. It was overwhelmingly passed by delegates at the General Assembly with 90 percent of votes in favour and supportive speeches from all parties.

The motion acknowledges the role which local authorities can play in the race to net zero, and the leadership role which they have already played from implementing climate assemblies, green bonds and warmer homes schemes, sourcing electricity demand from renewables, and developing new parks, open spaces and active travel measures.

As well as calling for the Government to give local authorities adequate representation at COP, the motion also called attention to the role local authorities can have in the production of local, sustainable food, and promoting greater participation among local councils on the C100; a network

of elected local leaders who pledge to work on climate and clean energy.

Cllr Phelim Mac Cafferty said:

"I am delighted that the Local Government Association recognises the leadership which local councils have shown on the climate emergency while our Government continues to drag its feet.

"From climate assemblies to the deployment of renewables, it's local councillors and communities who are rolling up their sleeves and getting on with the practical solutions to climate change, carbon reduction and widening inequality.

"We won't get to net zero without strong local leadership driving change from the bottom up, and it's essential that local councils have a seat at the table in Glasgow for COP26. Thank you to everyone who voted for our motion – I'm so proud that the LGA is showing the real leadership on climate action which this country is crying out for."

Green Party councillor Carla Denyer proposed and passed Europe's first ever climate emergency motion, with similar motions now having since been passed by three quarters of local councils across the UK. Many have now put forward detailed action plans for hitting local net zero targets, some within a more ambitious timeframe than the national government. [2]

Green Party councillor Andrew Cooper has previously proposed a practical means of how local authorities can be more integrated into the formal COP process, by suggesting that regionally and locally determined contributions are formally recognized alongside nationally determined contributions. This would mean that cities and regions across the world would put forward formal plans for carbon reduction as well as nation states. [3]

Green-led Brighton & Hove City Council has produced a plan that sets out how the city can reduce carbon emissions drastically by 2030. The 'Carbon Neutral 2030 plan' proposes measures across all sectors, including energy, housing, transport and through work with local communities. Brighton & Hove's Green Council also delivered a climate assembly and is understood to have facilitated the first ever youth climate assembly, to understand the priorities for future generations in tackling climate change. [4]

ENDS

For further comment or to arrange interview with the proposers of the motion email press@greenparty.org.uk

Notes

1

The full text of the motion is as follows:

Motion: Local Government contributions towards national climate action in the year of COP26

Proposer: Cllr Phélim Mac Cafferty, Brighton & Hove City Council

Seconders: Cllr Siriol Hugh-Jones, Brighton & Hove City Council, Cllr Julian Dean, Shropshire Council, Cllr Scott Ainslie, Lambeth Council

Propose that:

In light of:

- The significance of the 'Conference of the Parties' (COP26) UN Conference on Climate Change taking place this year in Glasgow, hosted by the UK; and its aims to accelerate action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and UN Framework Convention on Climate Change;
- The response of local councils to the issue of sustainable food, given that food systems account for 1/3 of total greenhouse gas emissions, environmental degradation, food waste and socio-economic and health inequalities; in particular the efforts of councils during the Covid-19 crisis in providing food to local communities, as well as supporting community food growing and assisting food banks;

The Association therefore agrees to:

- Call on national government to ensure the adequate representation of local government at COP26, in order to promote the significant contribution, leadership and efforts of local councils in reducing toxic carbon emissions across the UK, and to champion the innovative and rapid progress being made at a local level to tackle climate change;
- Encourage councils to continue their work to address climate change by:
 - promoting further signatories to the Glasgow Food and Climate Declaration. This Declaration confirms the commitment of local and regional authorities to develop sustainable food policy, and calls on national government to put food and farming at the heart of the global response to the climate emergency at COP26; and
 - promoting greater participation from local councils to the UK100 network

for UK locally elected leaders who have pledged to avoid the worst impacts of climate change, and switch to clean energy as soon as possible.

2

<https://www.climateemergency.uk/>

3

<https://cor.europa.eu/en/news/Documents/3894-leaflet-Cooper-v3-LR.PDF>

4

<https://www.brighton-hove.gov.uk/climate-change/becoming-carbon-neutral-2030>

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[Jonathan Bartley to stand down as co-leader of the Green Party](#)



Green Party

5 July 2021

Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley has announced he is stepping down from his role at the end of July.

Read Jonathan's full statement below:

"I am hugely proud of what the Green Party has achieved over the last five years. We have become a major electoral force, vying to be the country's third party.

"We beat the governing party in the last European elections and trebled our

number of councillors, going from opposition on a handful of authorities to playing a part in running more than a dozen. And despite the challenging circumstances of two snap general elections, we built up strong votes in key seats and are now in a position to win more Parliamentary seats.

"I have always believed that leadership is about empowering and encouraging others and this is something I've done throughout my time as co-leader. I now feel that the time is right to step down so that new leaders can be elected.

"It has been an immense privilege to have been the longest serving leader the party has had – first with Caroline Lucas for two years and then with Siân Berry for three, with Amelia Womack completing the leadership team throughout. During this time so many talented people have emerged.

"It's also increasingly clear that we may have an earlier than expected general election and a new leadership team needs time to get used to the role, which makes it the right time to step down now and allow the party to choose new leaders.

"I have been immensely grateful for the opportunity to put the climate emergency front and centre on the political agenda and to speak up uncompromisingly for migrants, refugees, disabled people and other protected groups who are so often forgotten and ignored, or at worst demonised, exploited and oppressed.

"I have also been grateful for the opportunity to advocate for the need for progressive parties to work together to defeat the government, tackle the climate emergency, eliminate poverty and reform the electoral system.

"This is something I believe is needed now more than ever. And so, I plan to use the experience I have gained during my time as co-leader to continue to develop the wider movement for a progressive alliance once I have stepped down from my current position.

"The road down which this Conservative government is taking the country has many of the hallmarks of neo-fascism. I have said this repeatedly over the last five years and it is now more evident than ever – and the need for progressive parties to come together to defeat it is more urgent than ever. But until progressive parties work together, there is a risk of Conservative governments for years to come.

"I would like to put on record my huge thanks to all my family including my three amazing children who have put up with so much over the last five years but never wavered in their support for me.

"As some may know I will be getting married to my partner Sarah next year and so I'm looking forward to spending some quality time with them all. I also look forward to playing a full, if different role in the Green Party in the future, wherever I can be most helpful.

"My resignation takes effect from 1st August. Siân will continue as acting leader while a leadership election takes place."

Green Party co-leader Sian Berry said:

“Jonathan has been a tremendous colleague. Hard-working, thoughtful, kind, collegiate and full of insight and ideas.

“Every member should applaud the huge part he has played in the Green Party’s progress over the past five years. His departure leaves many impressive pairs of shoes to fill.”

ENDS

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[Green Party calls for State Aid regime to favour sustainable sectors](#)



Green Party

30 June 2021

- **Party demands that rules do not allow public money to be used to benefit Tory interests**

The Green Party has called for the new rules governing public subsidy for industries [1] to be used to accelerate action on the climate and ecological emergencies.

Molly Scott Cato, Green Party finance and economy spokesperson, said:

“As an MEP I tried to ensure that, rather than a level playing-field, the EU state-aid regime was tilted in favour of the industries that will build our sustainable future. Outside the EU, the government has the power to make this vision a reality. They claim that our ‘bespoke’ subsidy system can be ‘nimble’ but we insist that it is also sustainable.

“Public money should be allocated according to a system of ‘economic triage’ to ensure that state finance is directed towards businesses that have a future in the zero carbon world beyond 2030 and are based in areas of lower

economic performance.

“Favouring industries that can manufacture wind turbines or electric vehicles, or that are building the skilled green workforce for the future, is the best way to make sure the UK meets net zero carbon as quickly as possible, which is essential for a sustainable future economy and society. This is not about picking winners but asking the government to put its money where its mouth is over climate and biodiversity.

“It is also essential that the Subsidy Control Bill should include a system of mandatory notification and an independent statutory regulator to prevent the government indulging in any more pork-barrel politics. Without this, we can expect to see a rush of legal claims from companies who are being disadvantaged relative to their competitors.

“We must see an end to the shameless use of public money officially intended to support jobs in areas that need ‘levelling up’ instead being spent to protect the jobs of Conservative MPs in marginal seats. This sort of politically motivated public spending must have no place in government subsidy of industry.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/new-subsidy-system-to-support-uk-jobs-and-businesses-boost-the-economy-and-strengthen-the-union>

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Green Party criticises Labour U-turn on free social care pledge



Green Party

The Green Party has criticised the apparent U-turn by Labour on its pledge to provide free social care. It comes in the wake of comments by Shadow Cabinet Minister and MP for Bristol West Thangam Debbonaire, who said fulfilling the Labour promise to disabled and older people would be too expensive.[1]

Peter Cranie, the Green Party's Health, Social Care and Public Health spokesperson reacted by saying:

"The Greens have always advocated for a move towards an integrated health and social care programme with an explicit commitment that people should not have to sell their homes to pay for care.

"We can't get away from the fact that more funding is needed in social care – even under the current system. The Conservatives, and now Labour, are trying to swerve the issue entirely so they don't have to address where the extra money will come from. When the country is crying out for principled opposition, Labour is providing none in order to avoid talking about tax or cutting wildly overinflated budgets like defence.

"The NHS was the health legacy of the second world war and there is an opportunity now to make a social care programme that is actually linked in with health care and provides people with the support they need, a legacy of the recovery from the Covid pandemic."

Among other social care commitments, the Green Party would invest £4.5 billion a year to fund council provision of free social care for people over 65 who need support in their own homes.

The Greens are also the only major party to back a 15% rise in pay for NHS healthcare workers.[2]

Carla Denyer, the Green Party's Housing and Communities spokesperson and MP candidate for Bristol West, said:

"To see this U-turn from Labour is a real kick in the teeth for disabled people and the older people in our communities. Our policies on social care – just like all our policies in the Green Party – are based on giving people the opportunities and support that they're entitled to, that are fair and offer dignity, not on whether the Tories will criticise us for them. That's no way to do politics!"

ENDS

[1]<https://www.disabilitynewsservice.com/labour-says-calling-for-free-social-care-would-just-give-tories-a-stick-to-beat-us-with/>

[2]<https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2021/03/06/green-party-supports-calls-for-15-pay-rise-for-nhs-workers/>

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Greens welcome Bath councillor from Liberal Democrats



23 June 2021

- Councillor Joanna Wright defects to the Greens from the Liberal Democrats
- Recognises Greens as party taking real action on the climate emergency
- Councillor Wright said: "Working hard for the people of Lambridge is what I will always put first"

The Greens in Bath and North East Somerset are pleased to announce that councillor Joanna Wright has rejoined the party after a two year period as a member of the Liberal Democrats.

Her defection resulted from disillusionment with the Liberal Democrats' handling of active travel schemes on Bath & North East Somerset Council, which she considered to contravene commitments set out by the Party in their 2019 general election manifesto.

Bath resident Councillor Wright recognises the Greens as the party taking real action on the climate emergency and social justice in tandem, and has rejoined her true political home with this defection.

Councillor Wright now sits as the sole Green Party councillor on Bath & North East Somerset council, meaning that the Party now has representation on 142 councils across England and Wales.

Councillor Wright said:

"I am proud to be rejoining the Green Party after a short period as a Liberal Democrat. During my two years as an elected councillor, I have been disappointed to discover that the Liberal Democrats are not as serious about the climate emergency as they claim, something which was made clear by local Liberal Democrats undermining their 2019 manifesto commitments on low carbon

transport.

“I have always believed that being true to one’s principles is important, so I have made the decision to return to the Green Party with whom I share a set of core values. Recent Green Party gains in Bristol have demonstrated that increasing numbers of people share a commitment to social, economic and environmental justice. It has become clear in the 2021 local elections that the Green Party is now the third party of England.

“My role as a councillor will continue to be listening to the views and concerns of local residents, and working hard for the people of Lambridge is what I will always put first.”

Councillor Wright was elected as a councillor in 2019 and was the Lib Dems’ Joint Cabinet Member for Transport. She also sat on the West England Combined Authority Transport board and the Western Gateway Sub-Regional Transport Board.

She has been a strong campaigner for clean air in the region and was a key advocate for both WECA and B&NES putting in their climate emergency motions.

Green Party deputy leader Amelia Womack said:

“Joanna’s decision to rejoin the Green Party shows that we are continuing to gain ground after the record breaking results in the nationwide May elections, towards becoming England’s third party.

“I’m delighted that Joanna has returned to her true political home in the Green Party – the only party committed to real climate action and lasting social justice.

“I know that she will continue to listen to the local people of Lambridge, act as a champion of the local community, and deliver real change for the people that need it most. Welcome home, Joanna.”

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