

Green New Deal needed when UK starts to reboot economy after coronavirus, Greens say on Earth Day



Green Party

22 April 2020

- **Greens set out investment plan to reboot and rebuild a resilient economy and tackle climate crisis**
- **Party urges government to move away from business as usual in face of economic shock**
- **Jonathan Bartley: “A green recovery is the only way to deal with the huge economic challenges while tackling the climate crisis, creating security and leaving behind the inequality that has damaged our society for so long.”**

A Green New Deal has to be central to any post-coronavirus recovery package, the Green Party has said on the 50th anniversary of Earth Day [Wednesday 22 April].

With the Office for Budget Responsibility predicting a reduction in economic activity in many sectors [1], the Greens have set out a plan for rapid and deep investment to reboot the economy and create green jobs while tackling the climate crisis and reducing inequality.

The investment, through the Bank of England’s QE programme and through borrowing-to-invest, would transform the UK’s housing to make all homes warmer and more energy efficient, revolutionise our transport and rapidly roll out renewable energy across the country. Hundreds of thousands of low carbon jobs would be created to carry out this work.

Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley said the government must not fall back on its business as usual approach to deal with the economic crisis facing the country when it leaves lockdown.

He said: “The government must be focussed first and foremost on dealing with the coronavirus crisis that is having devastating consequences both in the UK and across the world. However, Earth Day is an important reminder that the climate crisis is still looming.

“The impact of coronavirus has laid bare the inequalities that exist in our society and our lack of resilience. The recovery has to spell an end to these once and for all, not make them worse.

“We can direct emergency economic support so that it powers a move to a sustainable, secure economy and make sure, once we come out of this emergency period, we will have an economy and a society that is more able to withstand future shocks and tackle the climate crisis.

“A green recovery is the only way to deal with the huge economic challenges while tackling the climate crisis, creating security and leaving behind the inequality that has damaged our society for so long.”

At the last general election, the Greens pledged to invest £100 billion a year in climate action for the next ten years. [2] The plan included building 100,000 energy-efficient homes each year, revolutionising transport infrastructure, rapidly rolling out renewable energy in Britain and creating hundreds of thousands of low carbon jobs.

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://obr.uk/coronavirus-reference-scenario/>

2

The current best estimates of the likely investment needed comes from the think tank [Common Weal](#) who calculate the likely total investment for a Scottish Green New Deal as £170bn. Extrapolating their calculations suggests the cost for the UK as a whole may be £100 billion a year, for a minimum of ten years. £100 billion is less than 5 per cent of UK GDP. The Green Party is committed to invest on the scale the science dictates to save our climate.

At the last general election [the Green Party pledged](#) to invest £100 billion a year for the next decade in climate action as part of the most ambitious Green New Deal of any political party. We proposed to borrow £91.2 billion a year, to pay for capital expenditure. A further £9 billion a year of operational spending will be met from tax changes, including increasing Corporation Tax to 24%

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Greens from across 120 councils demand urgent funding for local authorities to tackle the coronavirus crisis



Green Party

17 April 2020

- Local authorities could lose up to half of spending power this year, letter warns
- Councillors call for more flexibility to decide on how to spend funding
- Sian Berry: “Our councils are stepping up but budgets are rapidly reaching breaking point”

Green councillors from across the country have signed an open letter to Communities Secretary Robert Jenrick to demand emergency and longer-term funding to enable local authorities to continue to support communities during the coronavirus crisis. [1]

The letter warns councils could lose up to half of their spending power this year if the lockdown were to last for just three months.

It also calls for local authorities to be given more flexibility to decide on how funds are spent, as they are best-placed to see where the real need is and how it can be tackled.

The letter has been sent by the Association of Green Councillors on behalf of councillors from across 120 councils, including Green Party co-leaders Sian Berry and Jonathan Bartley and Councillor Zoe Nicholson, the leader of Lewes District Council.

Berry, a Green Party councillor on Camden Council, said:

“Several weeks into the lockdown and with the increased demand caused by the crisis it is clear that the initial funding the government has already announced for local authorities is simply nowhere near enough.

“Councils are stepping up and providing vital services to our communities. Vulnerable people are relying upon them for a rapid increase in

support. But, after a decade of cuts and in the face of lost income as a result of the crisis, budgets are rapidly reaching breaking point.

“We urge the government to act immediately so that we can continue to do this essential work and not add further strain to the NHS and other essential services.”

The letter highlights the level of resources already being committed to emergency support by Lewes District Council, where the Green Party are in co-operative administration. In that authority, food packs provided to those not covered by the medically shielded programme has already cost £1 per head of population in the first three weeks.

Councillor Nicholson said:

“In Lewes, like every other district and borough council, we are facing serious financial problems due to the coronavirus crisis.

“We have been at the front line of the response within our community, paying out for additional food packs and housing the homeless, all amid a significant loss of income.

“Like lots of other district councils we received a measly 0.02% per cent of the additional money the government previously announced for local authorities. We have spent this money at least ten times over just this week. The long-term financial position looks bleak for councils like ourselves who are providing essential front line services.”

ENDS

Notes

1

A copy of the letter can be viewed [here](#)

2

The Green Party saw its best ever local election results on 2 May 2019 when it more than doubled its number of councillors from 175 to 362 councillors on 122 councils.

Greens are also in administration in 17 councils across the country.

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Greens send cross-party letter calling for government to support victims of domestic abuse



Green Party

16 April 2020

- Government urged to provide emergency funding to give all victims of domestic abuse a safe place to live
- Cross-party group including SNP, Lib Dems and Plaid Cymru signed letter
- Amelia Womack: “The lockdown conditions are putting victims of domestic abuse at even more risk than usual”

A cross-party group of politicians have signed a letter to the First Secretary of State asking for emergency funding to give all victims of domestic abuse a safe place to live. [1]

The Green’s deputy leader Amelia Womack sent the letter to Dominic Raab today [Thursday 16 April] in a bid to ensure that the vital services which provide a lifeline to so many women do not become overwhelmed during the coronavirus crisis.

The letter has also been signed by representatives of the SNP, the Liberal Democrats, Plaid Cymru, the Green Party in Northern Ireland and the Alliance Party of Northern Ireland.

It points out that at least eight women are feared to have become victims of domestic killings since the lockdown was announced and there has been a 25% rise in calls to the National Domestic Abuse Helpline since 31 March. [2]

Womack said:

“The coronavirus crisis is extremely worrying for everybody, but the lockdown conditions are putting victims of domestic abuse at even more risk than usual.

“We know that there has been a spike in domestic abuse since the lockdown began and vital services are being overwhelmed by the surge in cases.

“The government has acknowledged there’s an issue but it now needs to immediately provide emergency funding to local authorities so they can offer safe housing for victims of domestic abuse, as women’s charities and organisations have already called for.”

ENDS

Notes

1

A copy of the letter and its signatories can be viewed [here](#)

2

<https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/mar/31/call-for-uk-domestic-violence-refuges-to-get-coronavirus-funding>

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[Virtual Parliament needed before decision can be made on ending lockdown, says Sian Berry](#)



Green Party

15 April 2020

The government’s deadline for reviewing the lockdown measures is tomorrow [Thursday 16 April]

Green Party co-leader Sian Berry said:

“It is clear that before any decision can be taken on ending the lockdown we need to have mass testing, transparent data and robust democratic scrutiny

from a virtually recalled Parliament.

“There is no substitute for cross-party debate and it is vital that MPs are able to represent the people who put them there during this time of crisis.

“Parliament not only ensures that the government is held to account but it also provides access to a wealth of knowledge and experience to help guide ministers to make the right decision at this crucial moment.”

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[Government must urgently provide care homes with direction and support to prevent fatal spread of coronavirus, says Green Party](#)



Green Party

14 April 2020

- **Greens urge government to provide clear plan for quarantining and routine testing in care homes as a matter of urgency**
- **Party echoes charities' call for a daily update on deaths in care homes**
- **Co-leader Jonathan Bartley: "Ministers cannot be complacent about what is happening. Action must be taken today."**

The government must offer clear direction and guidance and set out plans for support today on how care homes can self-quarantine to prevent deaths, the Green Party has said.

The party has called for a comprehensive plan which could include allowing carers to voluntarily isolate in homes, ensure provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and provide care for the residents to reduce the risk of transmission.

Fears are growing that coronavirus could be spreading through care homes untracked, as the government's daily update does not include those who have died in care.

Care home providers have warned they have already seen hundreds of deaths in the care system. One provider alone said there had been more than 300 deaths with outbreaks in two thirds of its homes. [1]

The Greens have now also backed a call from leading charities for a daily update on deaths in the care system. [2]

Green Party co-leader Jonathan Bartley said: "The government has said vulnerable people must be cocooned from this terrible outbreak, yet we have not seen them take anywhere near sufficient action to protect those living in care homes.

"Ministers cannot be complacent about what is happening. Action must be taken today.

"Carers are being left to try and deal with this themselves, while the people who they have cared for years for are dying in front of their eyes.

"The government must come forward with a comprehensive plan of testing, provision of PPE and quarantine in order to slow the spread any further.

"The Government could allow carers and those with experience and appropriate checks to voluntarily self isolate within residential homes and provide care for the residents, while also safeguarding the jobs and livelihoods of care workers who are unable to.

"It is unconscionable that the government seems to be doing next to nothing to prevent or even track the spread of coronavirus among older people in care homes, while leaving carers, who are often among the most poorly paid members of society, to risk their lives and deal with this growing crisis by themselves."

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/apr/14/uk-care-home-providers-report-521-coronavirus-deaths>

2

Representatives from Age UK, Marie Curie, Care England, Independent Age and the Alzheimer's Society yesterday wrote to Health Secretary Matt Hancock to ask for a comprehensive plan to support social care through the coronavirus crisis

<https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/news/2020-04-13/our-letter-secretary-state-heal>

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