

Cumbria coal mine decision shows “government is the pits” on tackling the climate crisis



Green Party

7 December 2022

Commenting on Levelling-Up Secretary Michael Gove’s go ahead for the Cumbria coal mine, Green Party of England and Wales co-leader Adrian Ramsay said:

“It’s a disgrace that this decision has been cynically delayed until just after we have ceased to hold the COP Presidency. This government really is the pits.

“England and Wales have huge natural advantages and the economic strength to harness renewable wind, wave and solar power. The government should be leading the world toward renewable forms of energy not encouraging it to move backwards.

“The government’s environmental credentials are in tatters. Around the world, countries are striving to tackle the climate crisis by closing coal mines, yet here the government is opening one.

“This latest decision follows the green light for new North Sea oil and gas licences.

“Global leadership must begin at home and we need to see a clear commitment from this government to keep fossil fuels in the ground. This means no new fossil fuel mining and a clear pathway to move rapidly away from oil, coal and gas in favour of renewables and a nationwide programme of home insulation to cut both emissions and energy bills.

“The mine will not be ‘carbon neutral’ as previously claimed and its coking coal is not essential to the future of steel production. At most, only 13 per cent of the coal from this mine is destined for the UK market [1]. The rest will be exported.

“Steel production is currently one of our most carbon intensive industries. That has to change and the companies themselves know it. Low carbon production technology exists and should be encouraged by government, not held back by creating new sources of dirty fuels.

“There is no doubt West Cumbria needs jobs but over-promising in order to open a new coal mine is not the answer. There needs to be investment in the green technologies that will create the sustainable jobs of the future.”

Jill Perry, Green Party councillor on the Shadow Authority of Cumberland Council and long-term campaigner against the coal mine, said:

“This is really bad news for local people, because what we really need are green jobs that benefit everyone in the community, not dirty jobs in an old industry where the profits are sucked out and hidden in tax havens.

“If we invest in retrofit of insulation and renewable technologies in our leaky housing stock, a lot of which isn’t even on the gas network, it will provide more jobs, cheaper heating bills and keep the money circulating in the local area.

“The steel industry doesn’t need this coking coal plant and neither do we.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://theecologist.org/2022/dec/01/cumbrian-coal-mine-decision-imminent>

For more information or to arrange an interview contact the press office on press@greenparty.org.uk or call 0203 691 9401

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[UK transport falling behind – we need legislation to “get Britain moving”, say Greens](#)



Green Party

7 December 2022

The Green Party has accused the government of leaving transport “in a mess” by refusing to tackle key issues after the Transport Secretary says there is no time for new legislation in this parliament.

The statement was made at the Transport Select Committee [1] where he also suggested that the government could cancel plans for Great British Railways.

Councillor Matt Edwards, the Green Party transport spokesperson said.

“It’s frankly astonishing that the British government is looking at the state of our railways and thinking that there is no problem to solve here.

“Privatisation on our railways has been a disaster and the creation of Great British Railways was meant to better coordinate all aspects of services including the planning of engineering works on the network.

“Years of underinvestment and lack of direction have meant that the railways, particularly in the North of England, are past breaking point. The government can’t keep looking for ‘alternative views’ when the common sense approach doesn’t fit with their extreme market-led ideology.”

Greens also say that legislation is needed to finally address the legal situation with other pressing issues including pavement parking. Parking on the pavement is only illegal in London, but a new ban has been promised for years and would cover the whole of England.

Councillor Edwards said,

“I know the impact the delay on legislation around pavement parking is having, particularly on disabled people and parents with prams and pushchairs. The law is complicated and in many cases people are left with neither local authorities nor the police willing to tackle problems.

“The job of government is to govern. We need new legislation to fix all the loopholes in our laws and get Britain moving. But the government seems determined to avoid taking any responsibility for anything.”

ENDS

Notes

1

<https://www.parliamentlive.tv/Event/Index/20875a20-10d7-4d50-868a-d1f6b8776b14>

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[Greens call to extend legal protections for wildlife](#)



Green Party

7 December 2022

- **Call for legal protections for wildlife and habitats in England and Wales comes as COP15 biodiversity summit meets in Montreal**
- **Regeneration of nature should be at the heart of all policy making**

Green Party co-leader Adrian Ramsay has called on the government to introduce a Rights of Nature Act [1] as scientists, government officials and activists gather for the UN COP15 biodiversity summit in Montreal today [Wednesday, 7 December].

The Act would extend legal protections for wildlife and habitats in England and Wales, and establish an independent Commission for Nature to oversee the Act's enforcement.

Ramsay has also accused the environment secretary, Thérèse Coffey, of arriving "empty handed" at the UN COP15 biodiversity summit in Montreal. He said a Rights of Nature Act is exactly what is needed to demonstrate the UK is genuinely committed to halting and reversing species decline.

Adrian Ramsay said:

“This government stands accused by a wide variety of environmental and conservation groups of an attack on nature [2]. Ministers deny this, but the government is pushing through new laws that will weaken protections for nature and dragging its feet on introducing the promised nature-friendly farming payment scheme.

“Despite the UK being one of the most nature depleted countries in the world, Thérèse Coffey is attending the UN biodiversity summit empty handed.

“There is little confidence in the government meeting its target to halt the decline in species by 2030 [4], and the government appears to have made no progress on its commitment to restore 30% of land for nature by 2030.

“Instead, the pace that we are losing nature continues to accelerate and there is no sign of a reversal in this trend. We face an ecological emergency which poses real threats to human society – to food and water supplies, to clean air, to our ability to adapt to a warming world.

“This is why the Green Party wants to see a Rights of Nature Act [5]. This would provide legal protections for wildlife and habitats in England and Wales, and be enforced by an independent Commission for Nature. It would also ensure that the regeneration of nature is at the heart of all policy considerations.

“Such an Act would also seek to increase accessibility to nature for all, as this is an important way to improve physical and mental health and general wellbeing.

“If the UK government wants to demonstrate a genuine commitment to halting and reversing species decline, and avoid arriving at future biodiversity summits empty handed, it will show leadership by introducing a Rights of Nature Act.”

Notes

1. <https://www.rspb.org.uk/reserves-and-events/reserves-a-z/minsmere/>
2. <https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2021/10/23/green-party-backs-a-rights-of-nature-act-to-give-nature-legal-rights/>
3. <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/rspb-england-government-national-trust-wildlife-trusts-b2174501.html>
4. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/nov/28/tories-embarrassingly-poor-nature-targets-2030-labour-says>
5. <https://theecologist.org/2021/nov/01/rights-nature>

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Time to rebuild housing strategy in wake of axing house building targets, say Greens



Green Party

6 December 2022

The Green Party has welcomed a decision by ministers to axe arbitrary house building targets [1] and have called for future housing development to be led by affordability, quality and environmental standards.

Green Party spokesperson on Housing and communities, Ellie Chowns, who is also a Cabinet Member on Herefordshire Council, said:

“Councils of all political colours have pushed back against unrealistic top-down housing targets, which have taken decision-making away from local authorities and ignored the views of local people. And where targets have been missed, it has allowed developers to get away with lower quality housing that is less sustainable and less affordable.

“It’s time to rebuild a housing strategy that takes powers away from central government and the giant house builders funnelling money into Tory Party coffers and give councils the power to set their own housing targets to meet the needs of local populations. We need the focus of future development to be on building genuinely affordable housing that is good for local people while helping to tackle the cost of living crisis and the climate emergency.

“We certainly do need thousands more new homes but the priority should be on homes for social rent, built to the highest environmental standards so they dramatically cut energy bills and carbon emissions. We also need to prioritise building on brownfield sites and preserve our precious green spaces which are good for public health and for nature.

“All new housing must also be served by high quality walking and cycling routes and much improved public transport services.”

Notes

1. [Sunak to scrap housebuilding targets after pressure from Tory MPs | Planning policy | The Guardian](#)

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[Greens urge government to act on fuel poverty crisis today](#)



Green Party

2 December 2022

Green Party spokespeople have brought together a cross-government set of demands to ease the growing burden of fuel poverty and tackle the climate crisis.

To mark Fuel Poverty Awareness day today and Fuel Poverty Action day tomorrow, Green Party spokespeople have written to key Ministers to tell them that only joined-up government action can deliver the measures needed.

On housing, spokesperson Ellie Chowns called for a fully-funded, nationwide, long-term retrofit programme to insulate all housing to the maximum possible level, an immediate end to the building of hard-to-heat homes, higher building standards, and a winter ban on no-fault evictions.

For people with disabilities, spokesperson Mags Lewis called for targeted fuel subsidies for those whose home energy use is higher than average as a result of their disability, guaranteed support in the event of blackouts for disabled people reliant on equipment like ventilators, and a priority home insulation programme to bring down bills.

On health, spokesperson and GP Dr Pallavi Devulapalli called for increased subsidies targeted at those made most vulnerable by cold homes with poor ventilation, recognition of the mental and physical toll of poorly insulated, cold homes, and free hot school dinners for all children to ensure none go hungry this winter.

Green Party co-leader Adrian Ramsay said:

“The work of our spokespeople shows clearly how the impact of fuel poverty is felt across the population and why it requires political leadership and joined-up action to deliver the policies to combat it.

“New figures produced today by the National Energy Action for Fuel Poverty Awareness Day [1] show the growing scale of the problem, which is destined to worsen through the winter without concerted government action.

“We believe that a national home insulation programme will deliver warm, affordable and healthy homes for people while reducing energy use and helping to tackle the climate crisis.”

NOTES:

[1]

<https://www.nea.org.uk/news/8-4-million-uk-households-will-be-in-fuel-poverty-from-april-says-national-energy-action/>

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