

## [New Assured Skills Academy in welding at South West College](#)

The Department for the Economy has announced 12 training places on a new part-time Assured Skills Academy in welding at South West College.

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## [Greens welcome Supreme Court decision on deportations to Rwanda](#)



Green Party

**15 November 2023**

Reacting to news that the Supreme Court has blocked government plans to send asylum seekers to Rwanda, Green Party co-leader Carla Denyer said:

“This is welcome news. The government must now admit that its cruel and inhumane policy is finished and drop it.

“The new Home Secretary has the chance now to turn over a new leaf and make clear that there is no intention to quit the European Convention on Human Rights.

‘He should pledge to create an asylum system that works. That is one with clear, open, safe and legal routes for applicants, quick and efficient determinations and support for resettlement into local communities with properly funded local services.’”

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# Investment in flood defences inadequate to cope with climate breakdown warn Greens



# Green Party

**15 November 2023**

The Green Party has warned that with expected shifts in the British climate to more intense rainfall and greater frequency of flash floods, government investment plans for flood defences contain no guarantee that the country will be more resilient to flooding.

The warning comes as a new report from the National Audit Office highlights that the Environment Agency (EA) has reduced its forecast of the number of properties it will be able to better protect by 2027 from 336,000 to 200,000 – a 40 per cent reduction. The EA is removing 500 of the 2,000 new flood defence projects that were originally included.

A shortfall of £34 million in the budget for maintenance will also leave another 200,000 properties in danger due to erosion of existing flood defences.

Green Party co-leader, Adrian Ramsay, said:

“Despite the promise of record funding, the delivery is less than needed to cope with the potential flooding that we are beginning to witness from climate breakdown. As the thousands who have recently been flooded out will testify, prevention is better than cure. There is a big shortfall in the Environment Agency’s own targets, with over a hundred thousand people living in the most vulnerable areas being told that they are not a priority. Also, the false economy of skimping on maintenance means that another 200,000 people have to keep their fingers crossed that their existing flood defences don’t collapse.

“The government should allow people in vulnerable areas to apply for small grants to protect their businesses and households before a flood hits, rather

than only making these available after the event.

“There also needs to be a greater emphasis on creating natural flood defences through practices such as planting trees and hedges that absorb more water and restoring bends in rivers. And rather than bulldozing planning laws, as Labour proposes, we need to reassess planning regulations which unbelievably still allow for new buildings on flood plains.

“Ultimately, we need to deal with the root of the problem, which is to tackle the emissions responsible for heating our planet.

“The UK government needs to show leadership at the forthcoming COP28 climate talks by demonstrating a strong commitment to ending the use of fossil fuels, ramping up renewable energy, insulating homes, and boosting public transport and infrastructure for active travel.

“Unfortunately, instead, the Conservatives are taking a wrecking ball to the climate by making it easier to drill for oil and gas and undermining investment in renewables. Invariably the cost of inaction on flood defences and climate change will be borne by ordinary people.”

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## [Green Party reaction to Rishi Sunak's cabinet reshuffle](#)



# Green Party

**13 November 2023**

Commenting on Rishi Sunak's extensive cabinet reshuffle today, co-leader of the Green Party, Adrian Ramsay, said:

“This reshuffle looks desperate and is a sign that Rishi Sunak has run out of talent. David Cameron started the programme of cuts to our public services

which has now brought the NHS to near breaking point. Since his disastrous exit he has cashed in on dodgy lobbying for global oligarchs. And on the odd occasion where Cameron did take a principled stand – such as on maintaining the international aid budget – the government has since reneged.

“As to the departure of Therese Coffey as Environment Secretary, nature can at least temporarily breathe a sigh of relief as we await to see who replaces her. She put in place a subsidy system which is not working for farmers or the environment, and she has failed to tackle the blight of sewage in our rivers – a situation she herself described as ‘a scandal’ when I challenged her on it at a public meeting in Suffolk last month.

“We need a fresh start on the environment, with real action to stop the water companies profiting from failure and a proper system of nature-friendly farming payments which are easy for farmers to access.

“This chaotic and unprincipled government has reached the end of the road. It is doing great harm to the country. We need a general election now.”

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## [An immediate bilateral ceasefire in Israel and Gaza](#)

As Liberal Democrats, we have always stood in support of a lasting peace and a two-state solution in Israel and Palestine. In the face of the horrific violence of the last few weeks, we are clear that a lasting peace is the only way to guarantee the dignity and security which both Palestinians and Israelis deserve.

Hamas’ terrorist attacks on October 7th shocked the world. We condemned them and the taking of hostages, unequivocally. Hamas cannot, for the security of Israelis nor the future of Palestinians, be allowed to continue in charge of Gaza.

Right now we have a disaster. When I met with NGOs working on the ground in Gaza, they told me just how devastating a humanitarian catastrophe we are facing.

Thousands of innocent civilians have already been killed, including thousands of children. I met the Palestinian Ambassador just days ago – tragically he had lost family members. I passed on my condolences on behalf of the Liberal Democrats to all Palestinians.

And the humanitarian crisis just seems to get worse. Essential supplies like

water, food, medicine and fuel still remain in very short supply or totally cut off from Gaza. And 200 people are still held hostage, including children. And the risk of regional escalation grows by the day, underlined by the fact that the UK withdrew diplomatic staff from Lebanon earlier this week.

More than a month since Hamas' atrocities, it is increasingly clear that a military solution to eliminate Hamas is not possible. Nor is it tenable for Israel to reoccupy Gaza.

Only a sustained political and diplomatic solution will resolve this conflict and deliver a lasting peace. We urgently need movement towards that solution now.

But how? The answer is via an immediate bilateral ceasefire.

It is important to be clear. Some who call for a ceasefire really seem to mean freezing the conflict. But that's not acceptable. It leaves Hamas in place in Gaza.

My meeting with families whose loved ones are, right now, being held hostage in Gaza made it very clear to me that such an outcome is unacceptable. And so too is it unacceptable for Palestinians. They deserve a state of their own, and security, just as Israelis do too.

Freezing the conflict doesn't look to the future and will do nothing to bring about that long term security.

That's why a ceasefire cannot be an end in itself, even though it is very clearly needed now to stop the bloodshed and trauma for Palestinians and Israelis. It is temporary by its very definition: it is a step towards peace. And it is contingent upon both parties sticking to it. If one party breaks the ceasefire, a military option remains on the table.

I am not naive about the difficulties involved in getting to this position – it may require a cessation in hostilities, as we have already called for, to create the basis for a ceasefire, and we welcome any progress however small towards this goal, including the hours in specific areas committed to by Israel. Nor will it be easy to rid Gaza of Hamas.

Maximum pressure now needs to be applied on all parties, with tough conditions carefully monitored and verified. That will require a huge and sustained effort from the international community and the UN, with a particular role to be played by Arab neighbours.

Our job – and the job of the whole international community – is to bring an end to this conflict, and stop the killing of thousands of innocent civilians, while ensuring that we do not return to how things were before October 7th.

Movement towards a political solution, putting us back on the path to two states, is needed more than ever.

Right now, we simply cannot afford not to try.

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