

Economy Minister paves way for increased support for graduate entry medical students

Economy Minister Conor Murphy has today announced his intention to offer greater financial support for graduate entry medical students from 2025/26.

Lisburn company, CASC, wins £10m contract with world leading offshore wind companies

Economy Minister Conor Murphy has announced that Lisburn based engineering company CASC has secured contracts worth in excess of £10 million with the world's largest companies in offshore renewable energy.

O'Dowd announces £550,000 road improvement scheme for A2 Newcastle Street/Newcastle Road, Kilkeel

Infrastructure Minister John O'Dowd has announced that a £550,000 carriageway resurfacing scheme on A2 Newcastle Street/Newcastle Road, Kilkeel will commence on Monday 16 September 2024.

Greens become first political party in England and Wales to recognise Israeli

government conduct as 'Apartheid' and 'Genocide'

The Green Party has voted at its Manchester conference to recognise the Israeli government as an "apartheid" state, as defined by international treaties such as the International Convention on Apartheid (1973) and Rome Statute (1998).

The conference also voted to recognise Israeli military operations in Gaza as a "genocide" as defined under the UN Genocide Convention (1948).

Ellie Chowns, Green Party MP for North Herefordshire, said: "We don't use terms like genocide or apartheid lightly, but they are a sad reflection of the atrocities being carried out by the Israeli State.

"This motion reflects International Humanitarian Law, including the advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice, and it is essential that British political parties unequivocally uphold these basic minimum standards of international law."

The conference also reaffirmed support for the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) campaign.

Ellie Chowns said: "We will only see an end to the escalating violence in the Middle East when there are clear incentives for all involved in the war in Gaza to agree to a ceasefire, the release of all hostages and an end to the occupation.

"We will press the UK government to step up its actions, including suspending all arms export licenses to Israel, and full co-operation with the actions of the international courts.

"Without an agreement, the intolerable death toll in Gaza will continue to rise, the hostages will be at greater risk and there will be an increased chance of sleepwalking into a larger regional war."

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITORS

The motion passed by Green Party conference reads:

Insert the following into our Record of Policy Statements

Recognise Israeli Regime as an "Apartheid" and Amend Policies for a Sustainable Society in the International Section following IP634:

The Green Party recognises and condemns Israel's policies as apartheid, based on international treaty and customary law, including, most notably, but not limited to:

- International Convention on Apartheid (1973) and Rome Statute (1998): Israel's practices, including extrajudicial killings, severe movement restrictions, discriminatory laws, and economic exploitation, align with apartheid definitions.
- International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965): Israel's racial segregation and discrimination violate this treaty, which Israel ratified in 1979.

We call for an end to all forms of apartheid and equal rights for all. The term "apartheid" accurately describes the institutionalised regime of systematic oppression and domination by one racial group over another, as identified by international human rights bodies and legal experts.

- Recognise Israel's Genocide and Use the term "Genocide":

The Green Party condemns genocide per the UN Genocide Convention (1948):

- Acts qualifying as genocide: Israeli military operations causing civilian deaths, severe mental and physical harm, life conditions threatening Palestinian survival, and policies disrupting Palestinian family life and heritage.

As of 2024, the systematic violence and restrictions on Palestinians meet the criteria for genocide. This motion ensures our positions comply with international law and our commitment to justice and human rights.

- Affirm Green Party's Support for the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) Movement:

The Green Party should have included its explicit support for the BDS Palestine Movement in the 2024 manifesto. We affirm our commitment to explicitly supporting BDS in our internal and external communications going forward. Supporting the BDS movement is essential to holding Israel accountable, to supporting Palestinians' rights to equality and self-determination, and to demonstrating that our support, as a nation, is not performative. Israel should not be able to profit from its apartheid regime or its unlawful occupation of Palestinian land. If the UK Government has learned anything from its failure to support BDS during South African Apartheid, it must be that the impact of applying political pressure is nothing without an economic response. Anti-apartheid promises are hollow if nothing is done to reform the institutions that fund apartheid regimes. The UK Government must not make the same mistakes again.

ENDS

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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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