

5 Key Policies for the Environment and the Climate Emergency

This was being written in advance of the Green Party's manifesto being published, so these may not exactly match the specific details of what is said there – though i'm sure that the principles are the same, and I don't expect that anything here will conflict with Green Party policy.

5 Key Policies for the Environment and the Climate Emergency

(1) **Act now.** Make the radical reforms to our societies necessary to reduce mankind's CO₂ (and equivalent) emissions to Net Zero (or better) including ALL offshored emissions e.g. manufacturing, aviation and shipping, by 2030 – or sooner! The Green Party's Green New Deal is where all of the policies needed for this live: investing in our existing housing, public and commercial buildings; expanding renewable energy generation; improving transport; reducing consumption; making everything repairable, reusable, recyclable; returning to the biodiversity that creates a healthy ecosystem.

(2) **Act Globally.** Use the UK's strongest possible influence to make whatever global agreement is best placed to reach the necessary target as effective as possible. This currently looks like the Paris Climate Accord. To do this means active and proactive diplomacy, membership and leadership at all international bodies (UN, EU, WTO, ISO, etc)

(3) **Reduce consumption.** Remove the imperative for Economic Growth from our economy – and push for the same across the world.

We urgently need ALL economic activity to be environmentally sustainable. So the best policies for the environment can be adopted regardless of whether they increase or decrease GDP as currently defined. This means monetary reform – so new money is invested into the economy with zero interest (and not created as interest-bearing debt as is currently the case). Make all companies

and organisations put their environmental responsibilities HIGHER than their responsibility to maximise their shareholders' profit (because benefiting the environment ALSO benefits shareholders).

(4) Act Locally – return funding direct to County and District councils. Across Devon, having seen the councils and The Dartmoor National Park Authority declare a Climate Emergency, people are clamouring for investment in the necessary infrastructure and services to improve public transport, housing, cycle routes, essential improvements in biodiversity and management of ancient woodland, peat bogs etc that is essential for us to meet the Net Zero targets ourselves. It's crazy that this is not yet recognised in the way that central government funding is allocated. Major projects which might reduce journey times by a few minutes – but which also will increase car usage – are given funding while things that can reduce car usage simply count for nothing in the funding formulae. Government funding that once went directly to councils is now channeled through the Heart of the South West Local Enterprise Partnership. Councils have to bid via the LEP for investment into Devon – 7 out of the 13 current projects are roads. There is too little scrutiny of what the LEP is doing, who its members are and the potential conflicts of interest that arise from this system.

(5) Keep Learning and keep telling the truth. Understand what is happening to the climate – make sure that the best research is happening, and that our responses change as new discoveries are made. This is a global problem and needs a global solution. So make sure that the UK pushes the UN panel for Climate Change to keep updating its forecasts and models to be as honest and accurate as possible. Right now that is telling us to reduce the drivers of climate change asap – ie CO₂ ppm in the atmosphere – in the hope that we can keep the average global temperature rise to 1.5°C or less.

In our approach to education and life long learning: develop a culture of understanding, questioning, innovation – especially as it applies to best environmental practice, for all of our – and our children's – future health and happiness.

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