



FOR THE
COMMON GOOD
GENERAL ELECTION MANIFESTO 2015



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FOREWORD

Britain has the wealth and resources to do great things. We can build an economy that gives everyone their fair share of the world's sixth-richest economy. We can create a humane, caring society that supports everyone's needs. And we can be a world leader in tackling the threat of climate change.

Sadly, our current politics – dominated by a small social group and the power of vested interests – are failing to realise this potential.

Our manifesto is a bold plan to create a more equal, more democratic society while doing our part to heal the planet, which has been severely damaged by the effects of an unstable, unsustainable economy.

The austerity experiment has failed, as it did in the 1930s. Most people have seen their living standards fall, while the top one percent have increased their wealth. Millions of households are living in poverty, in fear of want.

Our NHS is being handed over to the private sector, resulting in a more expensive and inferior service, while highly skilled staff are underpaid and treated without proper respect.

Governments of all colours – except Green – are failing to get to grips with climate change – the greatest challenge of our time.

Yet none of this is inevitable – there is a real alternative.

We do not apologise for being bold, ambitious or having a long-term vision for our country. We certainly cannot continue as a nation on our current path.

We believe in restoring and extending our public services to create good jobs and meet the needs of a diverse population.

We believe in tackling climate change – taking serious action to limit our emissions at home and fighting for a fair global deal that secures humanity's shared future.

We believe that we can build a society that works for the common good – and that those with the broadest shoulders really should pay their fair share towards it.

Together, we can do this. We must do this.

NATALIE BENNETT, GREEN PARTY LEADER

OUR POLICY ON A PAGE

FOR THE COMMON GOOD

WE FACE THREE CONNECTED CRISES:

1. Healing the planet from the effects of an unstable, unsustainable economy.
2. Creating a more equal society, reversing the trend towards a society divided between poverty and great wealth.
3. Creating truly democratic central and local government that governs for the common good.

TO HELP HEAL THE PLANET WE WILL:

- Make achieving international agreement and action to limit climate change to below 2 degrees C of warming the major foreign policy priority.
- Invest in an £85 billion public programme of renewable electricity generation, flood defences and building insulation.
- Support local sustainable agriculture, with respect for animals and wild places.
- Cut emissions by providing cheaper public transport and encouraging cycling and walking.

TO BECOME MORE EQUAL AND SUPPORT OUR PUBLIC SERVICES WE WILL:

- End privatisation in the National Health Service, provide proper funding and free social care for the elderly, and combat the loneliness of the elderly.
- Let teachers teach in properly funded democratically controlled schools, end SATS (Standard Assessment Tests), league tables and academies, and introduce free early education and childcare.
- End tuition fees and cancel student debt.
- Provide 500,000 social homes for rent over the five-year Parliament, control excessive rents and achieve house price stability.
- Increase public spending to almost half of national income.
- Make tax fair and crack down vigorously on tax avoidance and evasion.
- Make the minimum wage a living wage for all, with a target of £10 per hour by 2020.
- Make the highest wage in any organisation no more than ten times the lowest wage.
- Create jobs and help small business by reducing employers' National Insurance.
- Bring rail back into public ownership.
- Ensure respect for everyone whatever their ethnicity, gender, age, religious belief or non-belief, sexual orientation, class, size, disability or other status.
- Create over 1 million jobs through our programme of green investment and restoring the public sector.

TO CREATE A TRULY DEMOCRATIC CENTRAL AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT AND A COMMON CITIZENSHIP AND TO PROMOTE PEACE BASED ON DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES WE WILL:

- Reform the benefits system. End workfare and sanctions. Double Child Benefit and pay a pension that people can live on. In the longer term, unite tax and benefits in a Basic Income system covering everyone.
- Fund local government adequately and set democratically elected local authorities free to decide how to run education, public transport and other local services and to raise local taxes.
- Bring in a fair voting system involving proportional representation.
- Respect immigrants for the contribution they make and control immigration fairly.
- Decommission the Trident nuclear deterrent system and promote peacemaking.

CHAPTER 1

THE GREEN PARTY: GOVERNING FOR THE COMMON GOOD

Imagine a world of efficient and welcoming public services, coordinated action on climate change, equality, workers' rights, an economy that works for people and planet at a human scale, restorative justice, and real care for the future, including young people now.

Imagine a world in which we protect the planet, its land and its oceans, and the plants, animals and people that live on it.

Imagine a world of security for all, of social security as opportunity not dependency, of lives lived more locally, with services close to where people need them and connected by affordable, energy-efficient public transport.

Imagine a government that believes in society, in our common humanity, in a culture of hope, and in our capacity to govern ourselves. Imagine a government that believes in the common good, and that the best way of achieving it is by working for each other, rather than against each other. Imagine honest government.

That's the world the Green Party wants to make real. It's also the world that most of us want. When asked to vote for policies rather than parties or personalities, Green policies consistently come out on top.

And it's so different from what we have now. In consumer societies like ours, the common good has been forgotten. So much government has been outsourced, put out to tender. The reins have been handed over to the unfettered market and big corporations. They are given as the reason why we can't do things (such as bring the railways back into public ownership), why we must do things (lower taxes for the rich) and how we must do things (privatise public utilities). When government has been active it's been to make the rich richer and the poor poorer, while blocking action to prevent ecological catastrophe. This has had disastrous consequences for the common good and for the protection of the natural world.

Back in the 1970s a determined assault on public life began, and the market became the model and measure of life. Since then, successive governments of all colours have found ways to justify and deepen the role of the market in our lives.

- *Local government?* Check out your nearest website or leaflet: you're likely to be referred to as a customer, not a citizen.
- *Privatisation?* Look at one of the most recent – Royal Mail. This was owned by you and me, then it was sold for a song, with windfall profits for companies doing the only job the market really understands – maximising shareholder profit. The public lost £1 billion, while George Osborne's best man's hedge fund pocketed £36 million.
- *Outsourcing?* This is what governments do when they've given up governing. The result is a series of scandals from companies with increasingly infamous names – G4S, SERCO, ATOS – over which we have no control.
- *Zero-hours contracts?* These are designed for companies looking to maximise profits through labour flexibility, but hopeless if you have regular bills to pay.

The market has been in charge for so long that it dominates our imagination and colours our view of ourselves. The market is short sighted and short term. It's time for change – time to put the market to work for the common good and for people to be put back in charge.

The Green Party knows that:

- It's hard to be a citizen when life tells you that you are a consumer;
- It's hard to think of others when we are pitted against one another and sold the lie that individuals are to blame for their misfortunes; and
- It's hard to think of the common good when it's never mentioned.

Private interests have ruled the roost for far too long. The result is a society scarred by inequalities of power and wealth, and a planet plundered of resources and damaged by pollution. All in it together? We don't think so. Those with power and wealth have done very well out of austerity: the UK's wealthiest 1% grab more than anywhere else in Europe.

Politics has fragmented, public institutions have weakened, people's lives are dominated by insecurity, and prejudice is rife. We live in a price-tag society – and if you can't pay the price, too bad.

Things that used to be done by public agencies have been outsourced. Once it was a duty for all of us to look after the vulnerable when times were hard. We paid taxes into a common fund to look after the poor, the weak, the old and the sick, and to educate the young. This is what we did as citizens, bound together by what we share rather than separated by what divides us.

Now care has been outsourced to charity, to food banks. Some think this is a sign of the Big Society, but we think it's the sign of a failed society. Individual charity is no substitute for collective justice.

For 40 years the rich and powerful have forced us to live in their fantasy world – a world that suits the minority not the majority. This is a world imagined from the point of view of the healthy, the wealthy and the privileged. Where there is a satisfying job just round the corner if only we could be bothered to look for it, where resources are limitless, and where the only obstacle to total fulfilment is the psychology of individual failure.

Meanwhile, in the real world where most of us live, we are young and old, sometimes poor and sick, jobs are scarce, the Earth groans under the weight of our demands, and the obstacles in the way of our flourishing can be stubborn and unyielding.

How should we organise life in this real world?

Do we want our security to depend on the underpaid zero-hours worker of an outsourced company, maximising shareholder profit? No, we want well-trained, committed workers, properly paid and secure in their own lives – because our well-being is linked to everyone else's.

Do we want a world in which privatisation is the solution for everything? Or have we learnt from energy, water and rail that down that road lies private gain rather than the common good? It's public ownership and democratic control that lead to fairer services and better outcomes.

The market makes us impatient with the suffering of others, tolerant of inequality, prone to prejudice, suspicious of difference. We know we can be cooperative, appreciative, understanding and fair. We just need a world that encourages us to be these things. Together we can create that world.

The challenges that lie ahead of us are unique in their combination: declining resources, global warming, deepening inequality, footloose capital. But these problems have been created by us, so they can be solved by us.

We need to remake society. And in this remaking we need finally to realise that consumer capitalism is the problem, not the solution. The solution lies in a democratically managed economy that operates within the Earth's resource limits.

We don't want a privatised outsourced state, we want a green and democratic one. We want a public National Health Service, not privatised healthcare. The uncoordinated actions of millions of individuals, with unequal access to wealth and power and urged to maximise their own interests without regard for anyone else's, will only deepen the crisis. This is what's on offer from the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats, from Labour and from UKIP.

We need a party prepared to challenge the damage this has done, a party that expects something better.

We need a party prepared for the real world.

We need a party for the common good.

We need the Green Party.

CHAPTER 2

A DECENT LIVELIHOOD: A ONE-PLANET ECONOMY

Imagine having a secure, fulfilling and decently paid job, knowing that you are working to live and not living to work. Imagine coming home to an affordable flat or house, and being valued for your contribution and character, not for how much you earn. Imagine knowing that you and your friends are part of an economy that works with the planet rather than against it. Imagine food banks going out of business. Imagine the end of poverty and deprivation. The key to all this is to put the economy at the service of people and planet rather than the other way round. That's what the Green Party will do.

WHAT IS THE ECONOMY FOR?

The main issue for many at this election is the economy. Many people have very practical worries:

- Is my job secure?
- Will our family have enough this month to pay the bills and put food on the table?
- Can we keep paying the mortgage or the rent?
- Will we have to continue to work unreasonably long or unpredictable hours?
- Is my pay fair compared with others?
- Will my benefits be cut?
- Will I ever get a pension?
- Will I ever get a job with a future?
- Will I ever pay off my student loan?
- Will I ever find a decent place to live?
- Will the economy provide a decent livelihood long into the future for our children and grandchildren?

Our solutions to these worries are very different from the other parties. The Coalition parties and Labour agree on one thing about the economy: it's got to grow because growth is the answer to everything. If the costs include ruining our climate and countryside by exploiting shale gas, tolerating massive inequality and the insecurity of zero-hours contracts or massive underemployment – then too bad.

We don't agree with the growth objective. Our economic policy promotes a fair, just and more equal society while recognising that we live on a finite planet.

It's easy to forget the fact that everything we make and everything we buy comes from the Earth. And we have only one of them.

If everyone on Earth consumed at the rate we do in the UK, we'd need nearly three planets to sustain us. If it's the average North American, then we'd need nearly four planets. Greens are sometimes accused of being unrealistic about economics. Nothing could be further from the truth. It's our opponents who are the fantasists, believing that continual growth is possible on a finite planet. Greens are the realists, understanding that the planet imposes limits and focusing on essentials such as jobs, housing and the household budget. The economy depends on society, which depends on the Earth and its resources. That's the order of things – not the other way round.

And what's growth for, anyway? The aim of politics is to help us flourish, and by this measure growth has failed in recent decades. The Office for National Statistics (ONS) tells us that Gross Domestic Product (GDP) per person has grown by more than three times since 1955, allowing for inflation. Are we three or four times more content? No, levels of life satisfaction have dropped in this period.

We're told that growth has returned to the UK. The result?

- More than one in four children is growing up in poverty.
- The bosses of the UK's 100 biggest companies earn on average 143 times more than their staff.
- The top 1% of the population has the same wealth as the bottom 55%.
- Five families in the UK have the same wealth as 12 million UK citizens.
- 913,138 people received three days' emergency food from Trussell Trust food banks in 2013–14 compared with 346,992 in 2012–13.
- Debt levels are growing. By 2018, 2 million households are expected to spend more than half their disposable income repaying loans.
- Household incomes adjusted for inflation are still on average 2% below what they were in 2009–10.

Joining up the policies. Government is run too much by Departments, which rarely take any notice of each other. Greens like to join things up...

So what do social justice and greater equality have to do with health, education, opportunity, the numbers in prison, and even recycling? This manifesto has many other policies designed to improve all these things. But just making us more equal will improve all of them.

So it's not the economy, stupid. Or at least not one that grows forever. The Green Party believes that equality is much more important than growth. And growth doesn't bring equality; in fact it helps to justify inequality.

The result of the corrosive trickle-down fantasy is plain: the sixth-richest society in the world is disfigured by high levels of deprivation. And it's not only those right at the bottom who have problems. Despite the fact that household incomes are now back to 2007–08 levels, families on ordinary incomes have faced a real squeeze since 2009–10 as prices go up and incomes stagnate.

We will abandon GDP and the pursuit of growth as a measure of economic success. We would use a measure of Adjusted National Product (ANP), which would take account of capital and environmental depreciation and include the value of many things not currently paid for, such as unpaid work at home.

Green councillors mobilise alternatives to payday lenders...

In a move to break people's dependence on payday lenders, in Stowmarket, Suffolk, Councillor John Matthissen is leading a cross-agency project to launch a collection and information point for the local credit union.

SHORT-TERM ECONOMIC STIMULUS

We make an important distinction between short-term growth, or 'regeneration', and long-term dependency on continuing economic growth.

The measures we propose as alternatives to austerity will, by halting and reversing the cuts to public services, restore lost jobs and create new ones. The increased economic activity will cause the economy to grow rather than shrink in the short term, restoring employment and living standards.

However, we see such short-term growth as transitional, as a side-effect of ending the failed austerity project. We do not see it as a contradiction to adapting the economy for One-Planet Living in the longer term.

ALTERNATIVES TO AUSTERITY

There is an alternative to austerity. The crunch of 2008 was the result of the pressures of our consumer society and an unregulated finance system; people borrowed too much and banks were too willing to lend. Now people and businesses are paying down their debts, businesses contract haphazardly and workers are laid off.

The Coalition's reaction was to use this as an excuse to impose austerity – in order to cut the debt, especially the government's deficit – while doing little to strengthen the economy. The winners are those who absorb corporate surpluses, the chief executives and the shareholders. The biggest losers are the unemployed, the low paid and the vulnerable, especially those who depend on public services. Labour plans to match the Tories' 'fiscal envelope' for Departmental spending – code for more austerity.

We think the economy should work for us all. We want a One-Planet economy that will address the challenge of climate change and unacceptable levels of inequality. We have to throw off the shackles of market ideology and consider afresh what really needs to be done. We need to:

- Ensure that everyone who wants one has a *decent secure job* paid at least a *living wage*. So we have to encourage and create jobs. In total, the policies in this manifesto will create over 1 million jobs. See the section on **Work** in Chapter 9.
- Address the issue of climate change. We need *huge investment* in using energy more *efficiently* and *generating energy sustainably*. This will not happen without public investment. See Chapter 4 on **Energy and Climate**.
- Stabilise and tightly regulate the *financial sector*, whose greed and recklessness have been a major cause of our recent economic difficulties and of growing inequality. See the section on **Finance** in Chapter 9.
- Provide equality and security in a mixed economy by committing to the common good, *a larger public sector and higher taxation*, funding our health, education and local services properly, and creating hundreds of thousands of jobs. See the section on **Taxes** in Chapter 9.
- Be prepared to borrow on good terms to fund investment rather than making *closing the deficit* the main objective of our economic policy. The plans in this manifesto require borrowing of £338 billion (in real 2015 terms) over the Parliament as compared with the Coalition's plan in the 2015 Budget to borrow £115 billion. If monetary policy demands *quantitative easing*, we will spend that money directly on *green investment*. However, the programme of public spending and taxation in this manifesto would show a *surplus on the current account* (that is, excluding investment) of 2.7% by the end of the Parliament.
- Reject the dogma that everything is best done by the private sector. A sensible economy is a *mixed economy*, where some things – health, education and public transport, for example – are better in community or public ownership. See Chapters 6, 7 and 12 on **Health, Education and Transport**.
- Support *those without jobs* and treat them with respect in a system that makes getting some work worthwhile and provides pensions that allow older people to live with dignity. See Chapter 10 on **Social Security**.
- Mobilise the talents and energy of *everyone* and serve everyone, including the young and the old, men and women, those who are disabled and minority groups, including ethnic minorities and different sexual orientations. See Chapter 5 on **Equalities**.
- Recognise that not everything that is *valuable* has a price attached to it.
- Create a robust *taxation* system that promotes equality and sustainability.
- Rein in *huge companies* that put shareholder returns ahead of the common good. Foster *institutional change* in the economy that we want, with changes to company law and encouragement for small firms and mutuals. See the **Changing Economic Organisations** and **Small Firms** sections in Chapter 9.
- Create an *efficient economy* that encourages innovation and the use of science but does not rely on dangerous technologies. See the **Science** section in Chapter 3.
- Foster an economy that is *open* to Europe and the wider world, that accepts people will move from country to country, and that is willing to assist countries poorer than ours. See Chapter 13 on **International Affairs**.
- Ensure that the *Treasury's priority objective* is to deliver an economy with these aims.

How we will do this is set out in detail in the following chapters.

CHAPTER 3

THE EARTH

The third planet from the sun. Our home. Home to 9 million other species. The only planet with liquid water at its surface. The only planet in the solar system with 21% oxygen. As far as we know, the only planet in the solar system that sustains life. Imagine a political party that prioritises the protection of the land, the seas and their inhabitants. Imagine one that believes that animals have a right to flourish and aren't just a means to the end of human satisfaction. Imagine one that believes the common good embraces other species and not just our own. That's what a real political party, the Green Party, does.

The Earth is our home, and this is what we are doing to it:

- We have lost half the wild animals on Earth in the past 40 years.
- We lose between 200 and 100,000 species every year. This is between 1,000 and 10,000 times faster than the natural extinction rate.
- We are causing a 'sixth extinction'. The other five occurred naturally; this one is down to us.
- We have increased CO₂ concentrations from a pre-industrial 280 parts per million (ppm) to about 400 ppm.
- Global temperatures are due to rise between 1.5 and 4.8 degrees C by 2100. And that's just the internationally agreed range without feedback effects. Many experts are predicting rises as high as 6 degrees C.

For the first time in the history of the Earth one species is changing it forever – the human species. They call this new era the 'Anthropocene'. We now have our very own geological epoch.

This brings with it massive responsibilities, which no other party understands or acknowledges. The rich and powerful, in particular, have spent too long treating the Earth like an indestructible storehouse, to be thoughtlessly pillaged of its natural resources.

- UK biodiversity is threatened by development and agricultural practices such as intensive farming, the draining of wetlands and the deforesting of hills.
- Genetic selection is causing endemic health and welfare problems in domestic and farmed animals.
- Animal experimentation is still routine; millions of animals suffer pain and death every year in the UK.
- Overfishing is devastating marine ecosystems.
- Our attitude to the natural world is epitomised by the fact that some circuses still tour with wild animals, including zebras, lions, snakes, tigers and camels.

The Green Party will put policies in place that will stop us treating other species and the wider environment as a means to the satisfaction of humans only. This is because the common good includes other species too. We depend on them for our own welfare. Every second breath we take is made possible by phytoplankton releasing oxygen into the oceans. As the oceans acidify and heat up through global warming, their capacity to 'fix' CO₂ and release oxygen is compromised. This is interdependence at work, and we ride roughshod over it at our peril. But we should also care for other species because the planet is their home too; we share it with them and we need to take their interests and well-being – as well as ours – into account.

WILDLIFE AND OPEN SPACES

We need to halt the damage to nature in the UK and return protection of our natural landscapes to a central part in our national life. The time has come for a new legal framework for the protection of landscape and wildlife, and we would promote a new Nature and Well-being Act.

On landscape and habitats we will:

- Protect, expand, properly fund and improve non-car access to our *National Parks*.
- Make good the Coalition's unfulfilled promise to *protect forests* through a Forests Protection Bill.
- Reduce dramatically the use of *pesticides* and prioritise non-chemical farming methods through improved agri-environment schemes, legislation, education and the promotion of good practice in all farming, as well as increased support for organic farming.
- Secure protection of rural residents and communities from exposure to *pesticides sprayed* on nearby crop fields and prohibit the use of pesticides in the locality of homes, schools and children's playgrounds.
- Improve the management of *woodlands* through new planting and the local use of sustainable woodland products.
- Aim to ensure through planning that everyone lives within five minutes' walk of a *green open space*, and ensure local authorities have the resources to extend and maintain local parks. Introduce a nature improvement area in every town, city and county.
- Help *bees* by reducing pesticide use (banning neonicotinoids), 'greening' farming, improving planning guidelines to preserve/ create bee habitats and making bees a priority species in biodiversity strategies.
- Promote *landscape-scale conservation*, using reform of the Common Agricultural Policy, improved agri-environment schemes and the planning system. In particular, all farm payments should be designed to protect the soil, reduce flood risk, conserve wildlife, improve water quality, increase recreation and assist carbon capture. We would also include protecting ecosystems in our aid for developing countries.
- Repeal the *National Planning Policy Framework* and in particular its presumption in favour of development, and put planning back in the hands of local people and government, while requiring local authorities to map local ecological networks and work collaboratively to develop national spatial plans.
- Increase the amount of land offered long-term protection through the *European Union's Birds Directive* and *Habitats Directive*, make sure these directives are properly enforced and defend them in the EU against attempts to weaken them.
- Work with local communities, scientists and conservation groups to expand the UK's network of *Marine Conservation Zones* to create areas specifically for the protection of mobile species as well as reference areas off limits to fishing and other extractive activities.
- Play our part in creating a *Southern Atlantic Reserve* and champion internationally the protection of the *Arctic*.
- Produce a strategy for capturing carbon and *reducing greenhouse gases through improved land management*, for example by encouraging and preserving peatlands.
- Because of the interaction between water supply and the wider environment, require Ofwat (the Water Services Regulation Authority) and the Environment Agency to work together to create a *healthy water environment* and long-term low prices for consumers. In particular, build new reservoirs in the south and east of England.
- Prohibit developers from being allowed to destroy unique habitats by way of *biodiversity offsetting* elsewhere.
- Because 94% of the biodiversity for which the UK is responsible is found in our *Overseas Territories*, ensure that conservation of the environment of the Overseas Territories, including their marine areas, is funded to a level equal to their global significance. We would also immediately extend ratification of the UN Convention on Biological Diversity to all uninhabited territories, and work with territory governments to agree a timeline for ratification of the Convention in all inhabited territories.

Greens in power carry out our policies

The Green-led administration in Brighton has secured open access to more green space in perpetuity. It declared over 800 acres of Council-owned downland and farmland as 'open access land', meaning residents can freely use land that was once closed to them. It added another 670 acres in July 2014, protected in perpetuity.

FOOD, FARMING AND FISHERIES

Market forces and government policies have favoured increasing industrialisation of agriculture, mass-produced food and dependence on fossil fuels. This comes with great 'external costs' to the environment, human health, farming people and animal welfare. Soil erosion, depletion of water resources, pollution, loss of biodiversity and animal suffering are commonplace. In addition, agriculture accounts for a significant proportion of greenhouse gas emissions, and pressure on land resources is linked with deforestation in many parts of the world.

But food supply and farming are not just another business, and we need to ensure:

- That nutritious food is available to everyone at prices they can afford;
- Decent rural livelihoods and support for rural communities;
- That there is national and international food security;
- That farming respects the environment and treats farm animals well.

To secure these objectives we will:

- Seek to reform the *Common Agricultural Policy* and reform our national agri-environment schemes to prioritise and support farmers who farm sustainably and enhance biodiversity on farmed land with a variety of farming styles, methods and scales.
- Foster *environmentally sustainable agriculture*, land management and a secure food supply by properly supporting valid, rigorous and reliable research into all areas and types of farming including organic farming.
- Encourage farming to operate in *fair trade* conditions, which guarantee a *decent livelihood for farmers* at home and also in countries that export food to the UK.
- *Protect productive farmland from development* except for that associated with agriculture and those engaged in it. In particular, review the current classification of farm land to maximise local production of food.
- Work to *reduce food imports* and increase home and local food production where feasible.
- Increase *localisation of the food chain* and encourage direct sales via local markets; support fair trade for farmers and enable them to gain independence from disadvantageous contracts with supermarkets by strengthening the powers of the supermarket ombudsman.
- Help *hospitals and schools* and other food buyers in the public sector to lead the way in buying sustainable products, and encourage children to be involved in growing and cooking food.
- Work to ensure *sustainable fishing policies*, leading to sustainable fishing communities, at both the national and European levels as appropriate. In particular, fishing quota allocations should reward local sustainable fisheries.
- Research, promote and support farming methods that *reduce greenhouse gas* emissions, enable carbon storage and have minimum impact on wildlife, as established by rigorous and reliable research. In particular, we should encourage *eating less and better meat*.
- Support a moratorium, at national and EU level, on the use of *genetically modified organisms* (GMOs) in all agricultural systems, including production of human food and animal feed, and on importation of GM food or feed.
- Work to reduce *food waste*.

Green councillors promote local food...

Councillor Molly Scott Cato in Stroud secured £100,000 in the District Council budget to invest in local food production for everyone. 'In a rural area like Stroud, it makes sense to support local food producers so that everyone can eat food grown within the district,' she said. Molly was elected in 2014 as the new Green Member of the European Parliament (MEP) for the South West.

ANIMAL PROTECTION

We support calls for a new Commission on Animal Protection, which would cover animal protection issues in all the areas specifically addressed below.

In **farming**, we must move away from the intensification and industrialisation of animal farming. Sustainable farming means animals freed from cages and returned to the land. We will end factory farming and enforce strict animal welfare standards. In particular we will work for:

A complete ban on *cages* for *hens and rabbits* and on zero-grazing units for dairy cows.

- Improved food *labelling* and *better traceability* of our food to prevent further food scandals such as the horse meat scandal; mandatory labelling of meat and dairy products as to method of production and method of slaughter.
- Mandatory *CCTV* in all *slaughterhouses*.
- Tougher regulations on *animal transportation*, including a maximum limit of 8 hours and an end to live export from the UK.
- Action to stop the *overuse of antibiotics* in intensive animal farming, with mandatory targets and surveillance of the human health impacts.
- A ban on the production and sale of *foie gras*.
- A ban on the *cloning* of farm animals and on the sale of meat and milk from these animals.
- Ending genetic selection for fast growth or high yields where this results in compromised welfare such as ill health or pain.
- *Protection for British farmers* from low-welfare imports.

Joining up the policies

So what do farming, health, insurance and carbon dioxide emissions have to do with each other? Good farming respects ecology, promotes biodiversity and encourages us to get out and enjoy the wildlife and landscape, improving both our mental and our physical health. And local food saves food miles, combating climate change, while good land management can retain water, reducing flooding and our insurance premiums.

Illegal **wildlife trade** is causing great suffering; it devastates species across the globe and is linked to other serious organised crimes. Greens will implement:

- Increased support and resources to build expertise in wildlife crime within the justice sector, including: strengthening sentencing in this area, gathering data on the trade, ensuring police forces implement local strategies and ensuring funding of the *Wildlife Crime Unit*.
- A ban on the import of exotic pets.
- An end to the keeping of *primates* as household *pets*.
- Enhanced *public education* and awareness to reduce demand.
- Allocation of resources to *support other countries* in tackling poaching and human/wildlife conflict.

On **other animal protection** issues we would:

- Maintain and strengthen the ban on *hunting with dogs* and extend this ban to all hunting of all animals for sport or pleasure.
- End the *badger cull* (see 'Badger culls' box).
- End the use of *snares*.
- End the practice of *grouse shooting* and other 'sport' shooting.
- End the use of all animals in *circuses*.
- End the use of the *whip* in horse racing and conduct a full review of the sport.
- Take action over other sports or entertainment that cause *suffering to animals*.
- Ensure UK taxpayers' money is not used to fund *bullfighting*.
- Ensure *greater protection for racing greyhounds* and initiate a formal independent review of the industry.
- Ban the *import of fur* products.
- Work for *stronger international protection of endangered sea creatures*, and an end to the killing of porpoises, whales and dolphins in all waters and keeping these animals for commercial purposes.

Badger culls – inhumane and unscientific

The Green Party has been strongly opposed to the badger cull from the outset, saying that all the evidence showed it would be both inhumane and ineffective at tackling bovine tuberculosis. The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) controversially went ahead with culling by 'free shooting' in Gloucestershire and Somerset in 2013. The trial was a failure, being shown to be both inhumane and ineffective, as predicted. The Coalition has nonetheless chosen to continue to pursue this strategy.

In October 2012 Green MP Caroline Lucas secured a major parliamentary debate to challenge the government's badger policy and led MPs in a successful vote against it.

Greens want to see an end to all animal experimentation and will ensure that research funding is directed away from failing animal disease models and towards modern human biology-based techniques, which offering greater opportunities to cure disease and improve product safety.

We will work to end **animal experiments** but believe immediate action must be taken to:

- *Stop non-medical experiments*, experiments using *primates, cats and dogs*. End the use of live animals in military training.
- Stop the breeding of and use of *genetically altered animals*.
- *End government funding* of animal experimentation, including any that is outsourced to other countries.
- Provide greater funding for *non-animal research* methods and link funding to a target for developing of humane alternatives to animal experiments.
- Increase transparency and ensure *publication of all findings of animal research*, including negative findings.
- Introduce a comprehensive system for reviewing animal experiments and initiate a *comparison* of currently required animal tests with a set of human biology-based tests.

On **companion animals** Greens will push to:

- Completely review and update existing *dog legislation*, particularly relating to dog control.
- Ensure properly coordinated action on *dog fighting*.
- Update the rules on *selling animals* and tackle problems associated with online advertising of pets and illegal imports.
- Introduce *mandatory licensing of breeders* and control on genetic manipulation through breeding to prevent exaggerated characteristics likely to cause suffering.
- End *puppy farming* by banning the sale of young puppies unless the mother is present.
- Introduce regulations that make it illegal to use *aversive training aids* such as electric shock collars.

Greens in power carry out our policies

In Brighton, the Green-led Council ensures that new Council tenancy agreements include a requirement that dogs living in council-owned homes should be micro-chipped. This has encouraged more tenants who own dogs to behave responsibly as their pets are much easier to trace.

SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Greens are pro-science. Our policies on everything from climate change to eradicating bovine TB are based on the best possible scientific evidence. But just because science allows us to do something, that does not mean that we should do it. We oppose nuclear power and the release of genetically modified crops into the environment. We need to balance our scientific and technological abilities against the social, economic and ethical consequences of using them – including their impact on future generations and other species.

Greens will support the development of technologies that have strong social, economic and environmental benefits. That is why we support investment in energy efficiency and the development of renewable energy, which will be vital in helping to secure improvements in people's quality of life and to combating climate change.

We would:

- Ensure that *adequate government funding* goes to research on major *environmental* issues such as climate change, pollution and biodiversity loss, and less is spent on military research.
- Ensure that basic research is adequately funded and is not controlled by large corporations, and gradually increase *public spending* on scientific research from 0.5% to 1.0% of GDP over the next ten years.
- Ensure that scientific research is conducted *ethically*, with regard in particular to human and animal welfare.
- *Publish freely* the results of all publicly funded research.
- Prevent the *patenting* of genes and living organisms.

What scientists say

So... the Green Party... a party of sentimental tree-huggers? Yes, we do love trees, and many of us take great moral and spiritual solace from the natural world. But we are also a party of science, and we listen to scientists. Here is what the Royal Society, the UK's pre-eminent scientific body, said in its 2012 *People and the Planet* report (pp. 7–8):

'First, the world's 1.3 billion poorest people need to be raised out of extreme poverty. This is critical to reducing global inequality, and to ensuring the wellbeing of all people...

Second, in the most developed and the emerging economies unsustainable consumption must be urgently reduced. This will entail scaling back or radical transformation of damaging material consumption and emissions and the adoption of sustainable technologies, and is critical to ensuring a sustainable future for all...

Third, global population growth needs to be slowed and stabilised, but this should by no means be coercive.'

We agree. In the General Election you can vote for the only real party of science or for the parties of neo-liberal economic ideology, which believe in the illusion that we can continue to expand forever on a finite planet.

WASTE AND RECYCLING

Reducing the amount of waste we produce and being more careful about how we dispose of it has benefits for our planet, our economy and society as a whole. We want to move towards a jobs-rich circular economy with as much waste minimisation as possible.

We would:

- *Reduce* what we use, *reuse* it when we have finished with it and *recycle* as a last resort.
- Provide the *framework* and the infrastructure to help people make more positive choices.
- Use taxation and regulation to ensure that products and packaging are designed with a view to what happens to them when they stop being useful and packaging reduced. We want *waste designed out* and *fixing things* – making them last – *designed in*.
- Follow Scotland in banning *waste food* and other organic material being sent to *landfill*.
- Increase national *spending* on recycling and waste disposal by about 50%, an extra £4 billion a year, so that we can do away with damaging incineration and landfill.
- Aim to *recycle 70% of domestic waste* by 2020 as a move towards a zero-waste system.

CHAPTER 4

ENERGY AND THE CLIMATE

Imagine flicking a switch and knowing that the energy was coming from the sun, the wind, the earth and the tides; energy forever, not just for now. Imagine not having to decide between 'heating or eating'; no fuel poverty. Imagine glancing out of the window and seeing a van arrive to insulate your neighbour's house as part of a funded nationwide programme – reducing demand as well as creating supply. Imagine your energy bill coming from a community-owned company or cooperative rather than from one of the 'Big Six'. Imagine being part of the company or cooperative yourself; energy security for us all rather than profits for the few. This is all possible; this is Green Party energy policy. Energy for all without climate change.

We all use energy. It keeps our houses warm, powers much of our transport and home appliances, and cooks our food. Our lives depend on it and it takes up a large part of our spending, especially if we are poor. Too many people suffer fuel poverty.

We get a bad deal on energy. When wholesale prices go up, the prices for domestic electricity and for fuel at the pumps go up rapidly. When wholesale prices go down, the retail prices seem to stick. The big energy companies make huge profits but do not serve the common good. We need to put this right and ensure that:

- Everyone is able to cook and keep warm;
- We are charged for what we use, and not penalised for using less;
- We are not cut off or forced to use pre-payment meters.

But burning fossil fuels for energy causes climate change. If we are to secure a safe and habitable climate for current and future generations, we need a rapid shift to a zero-carbon energy system; we need to leave the vast majority of fossil fuel reserves underground and unburned. Other ways of getting energy, such as nuclear power, pose other unacceptable risks. So we have to build a secure and affordable energy system that meets our basic needs while protecting our environment.

We believe this requires an energy policy that:

- Reduces the amount of energy we need, mainly by improving energy efficiency.
- Ends fuel poverty.
- Invests massively in renewable generation.
- Reorganises the energy generation and supply industry, in particular breaking the dominance of the Big Six suppliers.
- Puts community, cooperative and locally owned clean energy generation and supply at the heart of our energy system.

We have to start with climate change, because this drives the degree of urgency with which we change our energy system.

CLIMATE CHANGE

The climate is the ultimate common good. The effects of a rapidly warming climate will affect everyone, but poorer people, in the UK and worldwide, will be the hardest hit. Many are already struggling to cope with rising sea levels, flooding, drought and extreme weather. Climate change threatens to make parts of the world uninhabitable. Climate refugee numbers will increase. More intense weather events will further affect health and food production and make global conflict more likely.

The science makes it clear that, to avoid the risk of runaway climate change, we must leave around four-fifths of all existing fossil fuel reserves in the ground. So the problem now is not too little fossil fuel but too much. Exploiting new sources of unconventional fossil fuels such as shale gas and oil and tar sands is incompatible with tackling climate change. We must reduce our dependency on oil, coal and gas as quickly as possible while developing a society that can thrive on renewable energy.

And there's not much time. To have a reasonable chance of avoiding catastrophic climate change, we need a 90% reduction in greenhouse gases in the UK in the next 15–20 years and a zero-carbon economy by 2050 (see the box for how we derive these targets). This is much more challenging than the 80% reduction in greenhouse gases by 2050 in the Climate Change Act 2008. Although we celebrate, defend and uphold the Climate Change Act, it must also be strengthened.

A Green transformation would have huge benefits: more comfortable homes, better health, less pollution, lots of jobs, and far less dependency on foreign fuel imports.

The UK can and must do better:

- The government's climate change advisers say we are on track to miss even the government's unsatisfactory carbon targets.
- Progress on energy efficiency has plummeted. The government's Green Deal to save energy in our homes has been a disappointing failure.
- The UK is 25th out of 27 in the European renewable energy league table, despite having some of the best resources for renewable energy in Europe.
- We have the highest level of fuel poverty in Western Europe.

Why we need to do better than the Climate Change Act

If the global average temperature rise can be kept below 2 degrees C, runaway or disastrous climate change can be avoided, though severe damage will occur in some parts of the world. Many countries and civil society organisations argue that the international goal should be to keep to 1.5 degrees C of warming, highlighting the severity of the climate impacts we are already seeing. All countries including the UK agreed at Copenhagen in 2009 to recognise the need to limit the average temperature rise to below 2 degrees C, despite the fact that the UK's climate change target means that there is an almost two-thirds (63%) chance of exceeding this 2 degrees C.

To meet the 2 degree C target, the world needs to limit total global emissions over the rest of the century to about 1,000 gigatonnes (Gt) CO₂. Current projections have us exceeding that figure by 2040, leading to devastating average warming of around 4 degrees C by the end of this century.

As the UK has about 1% of the world's population, its allowable budget would amount to 10 Gt CO₂. But the UK is a relatively rich country that has benefited from the world's highest cumulative historical emissions per person. The Green Party therefore believes that the UK should plan to emit only half this amount by 2030 (which amounts to around 80 million tonnes CO₂ a year by 2030), and have negligible emissions thereafter. This translates into our target of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to 10% of their 1990 levels by 2030. This goes much further than the 80% reduction in greenhouse gases by 2050 mandated by the Climate Change Act.

USING ENERGY WISELY

Renewables can supply all the energy we need for a comfortable standard of living, but only if we invest wisely and manage our demand more sensibly – by reducing energy waste and improving efficiency. The Green Party would seek to cut energy demand by one-third by 2020, one-half by 2030 and two-thirds by 2050.

The UK already has the technology it needs. What is lacking is the political will to build a cleaner, home-grown, more local, more affordable, more democratic and ultimately more reliable energy future.

Caroline Lucas and fuel poverty

When joint chair of Parliament's cross-party group on ending fuel poverty and promoting energy efficiency, Green MP Caroline Lucas was a leading advocate of urgent action to end the scandal of cold homes. She initiated a debate in Parliament's Westminster Hall about curbing the power of the Big Six energy companies and has asked parliamentary questions, lobbied ministers, spoken in debates and tabled amendments to legislation demanding action on warm homes and lower bills.

Caroline has campaigned for home energy efficiency to be made a UK National Infrastructure priority and to be given the necessary funding. She has stood up in Parliament for an Energy Bill revolution – the creation of the world's most ambitious home energy-efficiency programme, which would slash energy bills and carbon emissions, create over 100,000 jobs and help end the fuel poverty crisis once and for all.

Home energy improvement will be central to this drive to accelerate energy saving while ensuring energy is affordable to all. We will:

- Provide a free nationwide retrofit *insulation programme*, concentrating on areas where fuel poverty is most serious. This is designed to insulate 9 million homes in total and take at least 2 million homes out of fuel poverty, aiming for the Passivhaus ultra low-energy refurbishment standard by 2020. It will offer up to £5,000 worth of free insulation, or other energy improvements such as solar photovoltaics (PV) if the insulation is already up to the standard, to every home in designated areas. To reach Passivhaus standards, there will be the option of up to a further £15,000 in subsidised loans from the Green Investment Bank for each dwelling for further improvements. This programme will invest £45 billion over the course of the Parliament (including investment in training and awareness), be delivered by local authorities and create well over 100,000 jobs. It will become part of a new Green National Infrastructure programme.
- Give tenants the right to require landlords to achieve the same improvement to the energy performance of their home, and require all private rented sector housing to meet Energy Performance Band C by 2025.
- Require all new homes to be built to the *Passivhaus standard*.
- Support this investment in insulating and building to Passivhaus standards with *investment in training* for the design and building industries, by creating a national college for training in energy home improvement, and building relationships with a network of affiliated facilities, including existing colleges and private training providers.
- Invest too in *energy awareness programmes* so that people become as aware of the energy performance of their home (and of other buildings too) as they are now of the miles per gallon of their car.
- Continue a fully funded *Renewable Heat Incentive* scheme.
- Provide £4.5 billion over the Parliament to support *research and development* into less energy-intensive *industrial processes*.
- Prioritise *public over private transport, electrification* of the transport system and *access over mobility*.
- Give councils the power to insist that *communal heating schemes*, for example using waste heat from industrial sources, are implemented where practicable.
- Establish mandatory standards for commercial building performance such as ISO 5001.
- Use *carbon taxes* (based on the present system) to fund investment in energy-efficiency measures, and prepare for the following Parliament a *carbon quota* scheme to regulate the level of demand for energy.

Green councillors make home insulation happen...

Work began last year in Stroud on a five-year £12 million programme planned by Green councillors Phillip Booth and Simon Pickering to improve the energy efficiency of over 1,000 homes in the district. New local jobs will be created for trades people to install insulation, solar panels and heat pumps.

The four Greens on Kirklees Council secured three years of free home insulation funding, against the active opposition of Labour councillors, who later tried to claim credit! This saved householders around £76 per year at 2011 prices and cut emissions. It also created 243 jobs in the local economy.

Carbon quotas – how they would work

The fairest way to share emissions rights is equally. So we support the idea of an economy-wide system of carbon quotas, with everyone guaranteed the same basic entitlement, regardless of wealth. Those who use less than this could sell some of their quota to those who use more, rewarding their carbon thrift.

About half the available carbon units could be distributed, free of charge, to all adults in the country. The rest of the carbon units could be sold by the government to companies and other organisations. Whenever you bought fossil fuels or electricity your carbon account card would be debited.

You would be able to sell excess carbon units – or buy extra units if you need to.

OWNING AND CONTROLLING OUR ENERGY SYSTEM

Our vision for the energy system is a diverse mix of public and private participants, including community, cooperative and municipal generation, supply and distribution. We will end the dominance of the Big Six energy companies. We will stabilise the ‘policy landscape’ for renewable energy to provide certainty for investment decisions, including long-term targets and stable feed-in tariffs.

We will:

- Maximise opportunities for *community or municipally owned*, or cooperative not-for-profit organisations to generate and supply electricity and heat at the retail level.
- Set a target for at least 42 gigawatts (GW) of community power by 2020.
- Require grid operators to give *priority access* to community energy projects at an affordable cost.
- *Split up the large vertically integrated companies* so that they can’t both produce energy and supply it to consumers.
- Secure public control over the strategic direction and policies of the *National Grid*.
- Support long-term *stable fixed-price feed-in tariffs* for renewable energy generators.
- Ensure that consumer *energy tariffs are progressive*, so small consumers pay less per unit than larger ones, that special needs are recognised, that people are not cut off when they can’t afford to pay, and that people are not forced to have pre-payment meters.
- Ensure that there is a *single scheme of regulation* for the entire industry, whose objectives include achieving climate change targets as well as protecting consumer interests.

Why we say no to fracking

Fracking is a process where water, sand and chemicals are injected at high pressure into shale rocks under the ground to release shale gas or oil.

Three years ago we called for a moratorium on fracking-related activity while the environmental and economic impacts of drilling for shale gas were evaluated. On that basis, we are now emphatic and unambiguous in proposing an outright ban on fracking and related extreme energy technologies (coal-bed methane and underground coal gasification, as well as hydraulic fracturing).

Fracking is incompatible with the UK’s climate change obligations. There is already around five times more fossil fuel globally than we can safely burn if we are to avoid dangerous climate change. Encouraging a whole new fossil fuel industry is deeply irresponsible and undermines international efforts to secure a global climate agreement.

Fracking will put communities and our environment at risk. There are serious and legitimate concerns about the potential for fracking to cause water contamination, air pollution and harm to wildlife and public health. Fracking sites would entail mass lorry movements, blighting our countryside and villages.

SPEEDING THE RENEWABLES REVOLUTION

The Green Party strategy for energy efficiency ensures that we can change to an energy system based mainly on electricity from renewables within 15–20 years (a little longer for transport). This will require substantial investment over the period. We also need to pay more attention to energy storage. So we will:

- Invest substantial amounts of public money (up to £35 billion over the Parliament) in *renewable generation* and in the National Grid, if necessary, to make sure renewable generation grows quickly enough. This would include both large-scale generation and *small- and medium-scale renewable generation* schemes funded through local authorities. This capacity would not necessarily be publicly owned and would include community-owned schemes.
- Give the Green Investment Bank full borrowing powers to help fund this investment.
- Concentrate on *expanding mature renewable* technologies such as wind energy and solar PV in the period until 2030 and bringing down costs, in part by reducing planning constraints, including those for onshore wind.
- Ensure that all schools, hospitals and other public buildings have solar panels by 2020.
- Encourage all social landlords to develop plans to install solar panels on all suitable properties, building on Kirklees Council's pioneering £10 million plan to install solar panels on 2,000 Council homes over the next two years. Schemes such as these can save people on low incomes the equivalent of up to two weeks' rent.
- Set deployment targets to bring down costs and attract investment in manufacturing and supply chains, aiming for 42 GW of offshore wind by 2020 and 60 GW by 2030, and for 25 GW of solar PV by 2020.
- Spend £2.5 billion over the Parliament on an intensive *research* and deployment programme for other renewables such as *wave* and *tidal stream* generators or other approaches, and also for storage technologies.
- Phase out *fossil-fuel-based* generation, including the closure of all coal-fired power stations by 2023 at the very latest.
- Phase out *nuclear* power within ten years.
- Ban all UK *fracking* operations – following a growing number of nations worldwide – and withdraw all relevant licences as soon as possible. Ban other new fossil fuel developments such as other unconventional fossil fuels and open cast coal.
- End fossil fuel industry tax breaks, phase out other harmful fossil fuel subsidies (domestic and international) and use the money saved to help fund other parts of our energy programme.
- Work with financial institutions, local councils and others to encourage *divestment from fossil fuels* and develop alternative investment in efficiency and renewables programmes.
- Support the potential deployment of *carbon capture and storage* to existing biomass and gas power stations only as a transitional technology.
- Develop *biomass* generation only where it can be done in a sustainable way giving regard to the environmental and human costs of some large-scale biomass fuel operations.
- Set in law a decarbonisation target for the power sector of *25–50 grams of carbon dioxide per kilowatt hour by 2030*.
- Expand *electricity storage capacity*, including using the potential storage capacity of electric vehicles, and develop the commercial and regulatory framework to make this a reality.
- Introduce *smart* meters and appliances.

ADAPTING TO CLIMATE CHANGE

Apart from rebuilding the UK's energy system, we also need to adapt to the climate change that will take place as the effects of past emissions work their way through the system. In the UK there will be wetter winters and hotter and drier summers. We can expect greater instability, with more episodes of extreme weather, such as the heavy rain and floods of the 2013–14 winter. We need to begin urgently to prepare for this by:

- Providing help for people and communities to prepare for an increasingly variable climate. We would give an extra £1 billion a year to local authorities and the Environment Agency to spend on assisting communities with flood protection and on defending homes and public buildings, such as hospitals, from heat waves.
- Obliging government departments and local authorities to *consider climate change and carbon reduction in all their planning* over a long time horizon of 50–100 years. Specifically, local authorities should do so in all planning decisions.
- Having the government act as an *insurer of last resort* where commercial insurance companies are refusing to provide flood cover.
- Preventing new building on flood plains.
- Encouraging storing water in uplands through full river system management – including wetland restoration, natural regeneration, allowing rivers to meander and allowing flooding upstream. Water management needs to become part of the rules for farming subsidies.

Green councillor sets the pace on flooding...

Thanks to a lone Green councillor, who at the time held the balance of power, Islington became the first UK Council to set a minimum amount of 'permeable' land to prevent flooding.

Nuclear energy – it's still no thanks

In recent years, the nuclear industry has tried to re-brand itself as 'green'. As the UK's only environmental party, the Green Party needs to set out why it still considers that nuclear is no answer to either climate change or our energy needs.

Nuclear energy is not green. Nuclear energy is neither zero carbon nor renewable and there is serious debate about whether it is even low carbon. Uncertainties involved in carbon costing, radioactive waste management and the carbon costs of obtaining uranium mean that the carbon costs of nuclear are unknowable. Unlike renewables, we simply cannot rely on it being low carbon.

In addition to its highly dubious 'low-carbon' credentials, nuclear energy is a seriously flawed policy in other ways:

- Nuclear energy is extremely expensive: not one nuclear plant has ever been built, anywhere in the world by private investors without huge public subsidies. The Coalition government has agreed to guarantee EDF nearly double the current market electricity price at Hinkley, in addition to other financial backing not available to other low-carbon generators. These subsidies would impose enormous and unjustifiable costs on householders and businesses.
- Nuclear remains a uniquely dangerous form of energy. If the new plant being built by EDF at Hinkley were to release an equivalent amount of radiation to Fukushima, and the wind was in the south-west, Bristol would need to be permanently evacuated.
- No long-term solution has yet been found to the question of dealing with nuclear waste.
- Wind power has been found to create around 12 times as many jobs as the same investment in nuclear, and solar power is estimated to create around 360 times as many jobs. Investing in energy efficiency (e.g. insulation) creates even more jobs.
- Renewables can provide the same 'base load' production as nuclear power at a lower cost without the risks. Nuclear power diverts investment, skills and expertise away from securing the economic, employment and energy security benefits of home-grown renewables, smart grids and demand reduction.
- The current UK nuclear programme is planned around a reactor design, the European Pressurized Reactor (EPR), which has an atrocious construction and cost record. EPRs being built in France and Finland are years behind schedule and have huge cost overruns. Even if nuclear were the answer, the EPR would still be the wrong plant to build.

CHAPTER 5

EQUALITIES

More equal societies almost always do better than unequal ones – and that’s true for the well-off as well as for the poor. Almost every modern social and environmental problem – ill health, lack of community life, violence, drugs, obesity, mental illness, long working hours, big prison populations – is more likely to occur in a less equal society. Imagine a world in which everyone is respected whatever their ethnicity, gender, age, religious belief or non-belief, sexual orientation, gender identity, class, size, disability or other status. Imagine a world in which no one earns more than ten times what anyone else earns. We’d all be healthier, happier and more confident. This could be the real world the Green Party creates.

The Green Party is opposed to inequality not just because it is wrong in itself and because more equal societies are happier societies, but because it fosters inappropriate growth. We are encouraged to measure our prosperity by comparing it with the material conditions of others. Celebrity culture and the lifestyles of the rich create a climate of envy and a desire to match them. This fuels consumption that satisfies pointless wants for some rather than vital needs for all.

Growth justifies inequality. It is claimed that:

- If the economy gets bigger some benefit will ‘trickle down’ to the poor and vulnerable;
- A rising tide floats all boats – forgetting that not everyone has a boat.

However, recent research by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) confirms that this theory is just wrong. In a resource-constrained world, equality makes much more sense than inequality. Our taxation, pay and social security plans will make the UK a materially more equal society.

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

Equality is a matter not just of material goods but of treating people fairly – celebrating diversity rather than punishing it. The Green Party aims to treat everyone equally and fairly.

We will:

- Reinstating the funding for the Equality and Human Rights Commission.
- Make *equality and diversity lessons mandatory in all schools*, from the first year of primary education onwards, to combat all forms of prejudice and bullying, to promote understanding and acceptance of difference and to ensure community cohesion.
- Continue to tackle *institutional racism in the police force* and the wider criminal justice system.
- Require all *police forces* to have equality and diversity liaison officers whose remit is to tackle and take preventive action on crimes originating in discrimination against any group, and to treat crimes arising from such discrimination on a par with racist crimes.
- Implement a UK-wide strategy to tackle *violence against women*, including domestic violence, rape and sexual abuse, female genital mutilation and trafficking.
- Ensure that effective action is taken to prevent discrimination against *people with disabilities*.

- Provide comprehensive training for *teachers* and educational staff on all diversity and inclusion issues.
- Oblige *schools* to promote equal opportunities in their anti-bullying procedures and to monitor equality issues in teaching recruitment.
- Work towards ending stigma against people with *mental health* problems, including discrimination in employment.
- Progressively introduce *anonymised CVs* so that Black and Minority Ethnic and female candidates are not excluded before the interview stage because of their identity.
- Ensure that the *public sector* does more to employ more *Black and Minority Ethnic* employees.
- Strengthen *Travellers' rights* to sites and guarantee proper protection of the nomadic lifestyle of Travellers while ensuring that the lifestyle of the settled population is also protected.
- Enforce penalties against employers who continue to implement *unequal pay*.
- Work vigorously towards ensuring that all levels of *government* and public bodies are representative of the diversity of the populations for whom they work.
- Support proposals by the Speaker of the House of Common to set up an *Equalities Committee*.

Greens in power carry out our policies

Stonewall put the Green-led Brighton Council in first place in their 2014 Education Equality Index. Stonewall has described the Council as 'leading the way' in celebrating difference and supporting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender students.

Brighton Council also introduced the landmark trans scrutiny panel, looking how to address transphobia in the city. Of the 37 initial recommendations, 25 have started or been implemented, including addressing transphobia in schools, allowing genderless honorifics for Council documentation and easing access to healthcare for trans people.

LESBIAN, GAY, BISEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, INTERSEX AND QUEER (LGBTIQ) PEOPLE

Despite recent modest advances, discrimination against LGBTIQ people remains in areas such as housing, education, employment and health. The Green Party supports campaigns to advance LGBTIQ rights and aims to build a society where everyone is valued, respected and empowered, regardless of their sexuality or gender identity.

We will:

- Legislate to remedy *inequality in pension inheritance* for same-sex marriage partners and same-sex civil partners.
- Consider *reducing the 12-month blood donation deferral period* for men who have sex with men, based on individual risk assessment where the donor is identified to be not at risk of passing infections into the blood supply.
- *Apologise to and pardon* all 50,000–100,000 men convicted of consenting adult same-sex relations under anti-gay laws that have now been repealed.
- Provide mandatory *HIV, sex and relationship education* – age appropriate and LGBTIQ inclusive – in all schools from primary level onwards.
- Require every school to have an *anti-bullying programme* that explicitly combats homophobic, biphobic and transphobic bullying.
- Combat homophobic, biphobic and transphobic *violence* by ensuring uniform legislation against all forms of hate crime.
- End the *cuts to the NHS*, which have undermined HIV services and made it harder for trans people to access gender reassignment services.
- End the *detention of LGBTIQ (and other) asylum seekers* and the culture of disbelief that often denies them refugee status.
- Challenge *criminalisation, discrimination and violence against LGBTIQ people in other countries* and work in solidarity with campaigners there.
- Press the *Commonwealth* to grant accredited status to a Commonwealth LGBTIQ Association and to *urge all member states to end the criminalisation of homosexuality* and to protect LGBTIQ citizens against discrimination and hate crime.

Joining up the policies

Anti-discrimination policies on their own aren't enough. It's vital to see the connections between one policy decision and its effects elsewhere in society. Cuts and austerity measures have a disproportionate effect on LGBTIQ people because of higher levels of reliance on public services due to family estrangement, societal and workplace discrimination, and specific healthcare needs.

Likewise, cuts in youth, housing and social services are more likely to affect young LGBTIQ people, particularly those who are estranged from their families. LGBTIQ people are more likely to face unemployment and the impact of this can be much greater because they may not be able to rely on wider social networks. Cuts to services for older and disabled people will have a much greater impact on LGBTIQ people, who are less likely to have children and will be more reliant on public services.

So, restoring the public realm contributes to equality and diversity.

WOMEN

Since 2010, recent progress in advancing women's equality has been undermined and reversed. Women are now:

- **Poorer** – nearly three-quarters of the government's 'savings' have been paid for by women;
- **Earning less** – the value of low pay in particular is declining, and the pay gap between men and women in their twenties has doubled;
- **Over-burdened** – as support services have been slashed, women are left carrying the load; and
- **More at risk of gendered violence** – because funding for services that support survivors of sexual and domestic violence has been reduced.

This is all a consequence of deliberate government action. The Public Sector Equality Duty, which assesses the impact of government, is designed to solve problems in isolation – the lack of a job or of a place to live, an illness – but problems usually arise together. An alternative approach, based on Women's Centres, has shown the potential to break down barriers and provide an effective holistic approach that facilitates resilience and recovery for women and their families. The Green Party would fund the creation of a nationwide set of pilots, and if their early promise turns out to be fulfilled would intend expanding this to a universal nationwide scheme, run in the voluntary sector by women but given secure long-term core funding through local government.

We will also:

- Make *equal pay* for men and women a reality.
- Require 40% of all members of public company and public sector boards to be women.
- *Listen to girls and young women* about relationships education and about sexism in the media and make *personal, social, health and economic education* (PSHE) a compulsory part of the school curriculum.
- Take steps to tackle *media sexism*, starting with working with retailers to stop lads mags and other pornography from being sold in supermarkets and newsagents.
- Ensure that the laws to prevent *discrimination* against women on the grounds of pregnancy and maternity are properly enforced.
- Follow Scotland's lead and make it illegal to stop *nursing mothers* feeding their babies in a public place.
- Ensure consistent long-term funding for a national network of *Rape Crisis Centres*, spending up to £100 million on the network over the course of the Parliament.

DISABILITY

Instead of helping disadvantaged people, the Coalition has scapegoated and isolated them. Private firms assess people on the verge of death as fit for work. The 'bedroom tax' plays havoc with any person who is disabled and needs an extra room for equipment or a carer. Austerity has brought cuts to disability benefits, harming the most vulnerable in our society.

The Green Party is committed to the social model of disability. People who are disabled have a right to participate fully in society.

We will:

- Support the principles of, and enforce the *UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*.
- End the pernicious system whereby an external contractor assesses whether people are *fit for work* and return to the system of relying on the judgement of GPs or other health professionals.
- Increase the budget for *Disability Living Allowance / Personal Independence Payments* by around £1 billion a year.
- Retain the *Independent Living Fund*, which enables over 18,000 severely disabled people to stay in their home instead of being in residential care, costing around £300 million a year.
- Provide a further £0.5 billion for *free social care* for adults aged 18–65 who have a proven care need.
- *Increase the Carer's Allowance* by 50%, costing £1.2 billion a year (6.5 million carers save the state £119 billion), and provide carers with a legal right to 5–10 days paid annual leave.
- Raise the profile of the *Access to Work* scheme among smaller firms and under-served disabled people, with far greater transparency over how the scheme is administered.
- Provide older *carers* with more generous and consistent support through a Citizen's Pension.
- Integrate health and care services so as to *look after carers* as well as those they care for.
- Recognise the rights of *children who are disabled*, and their families, in education, in the transition to adult life, in childcare, in healthcare and in the benefits system.
- Recognise fully the *housing needs* of people who are disabled, including support with planning and obtaining housing.
- Make it a licensing condition for *taxis* that drivers have Disability Awareness Training.

YOUNG PEOPLE

Young people face very practical immediate problems with getting a good start in life. Decent jobs, jobs with a future and training, are hard to come by. The lucky few can get an internship or take advantage of good connections, but overall social mobility is in reverse. You can go to university, but only if you are prepared to saddle yourself with a huge debt. Affordable housing is scarce. And threats such as climate change and ever-rising levels of inequality will have a far greater impact on future generations.

Young people must be supported outside school as well as in it; online and offline. They need places they can call their own, where they can safely play and explore. This means playgroups for toddlers, safe streets for kids to play in, and youth centres for teenagers. The Green Party would:

- Ensure that the UK's child protection systems are effective at tackling *child neglect and abuse* early on, including changing the law so that emotional abuse is treated on a par with physical abuse and giving police and child protection professionals clear guidance to help them work effectively.
- Set clear targets for *ending child poverty*, including ways to measure it and fund local authorities properly so they can focus on early support to help children, young people and their families.
- Increase the current investment in *young people's services*, providing a comprehensive and inclusive youth service, including youth clubs, youth councils and non-curricular education and training, costing an extra £1.1 billion a year.
- Extend *free local public transport to young people* and students, spending up to £4 billion a year. This would encourage the habit of using public transport among young people early on, with a view to making this a behaviour for life.
- Support *20 mph zones*, cycle schemes and public transport to make our *streets* safe and useful for young people.
- Raise the age of criminal responsibility from 10 to 14.
- Lower the *voting age* to 16.
- Reform the judicial system to create a strong statutory *presumption against the imprisonment* of young offenders.
- Restrict police use of random *stop and search powers*, which especially damage police relationships with young people.
- Make *higher education* free and end the student loan system.

- End the *exploitation of interns*; ensure no unpaid full-time internship lasts more than four weeks.
- Make *renting affordable* and possible again for young people through our housing policies, especially those on regulating the private rented sector and rents.
- End the exploitation of young people in *low-wage jobs* through our living wage policy.
- Keep *Housing Benefit* for under 25s.
- Do more for young people who have no family; a basic first step would be to pay foster carers a salary, costing about £0.9 billion a year.
- Provide access to suitable emergency accommodation for the 200,000 young people who go missing every year if they are unable to return home safely.
- Support the right of young people all over Europe *to go to other parts of the EU* to work and broaden their experience.
- Provide more *training and work experience* for young unemployed people through expanding apprenticeships; specifically, provide an apprenticeship to all qualified young people aged 16–25 who do not have one and want one.

What Green councillors do for young people out of school...

In 2012, Green councillor Simon Grover persuaded Tory-run St Albans, Hertfordshire, to pledge to provide a youth centre in the town in the next five years.

In Malvern, Worcestershire, Green councillor John Raines led the campaign to allow the community to buy a Council-owned youth centre earmarked for demolition and housing development. It is now thriving under community ownership.

OLDER PEOPLE AND PENSIONS

Age used to be respected. Now there's the beginning of a backlash against older people, particularly the baby boomer generation approaching their seventies. They've had it easy, it's said – secure jobs, final salary pensions, good health and a housing market that has rewarded them but made it almost impossible for today's young people to get housed. And, as a generation, they have despoiled the planet and their swelling numbers threaten to bankrupt our health and pension systems.

The real picture is more complex. There are huge inequalities between older people, and many have had difficult lives. The free university education of the past was a privilege for a tiny group of people. Many more working lives were totally disrupted by Margaret Thatcher's assault on manufacturing industry in the 1980s – these older people bear the scars of industrial diseases and health inequalities. Many older women in particular have lead lives confined by lack of opportunity.

The Green Party's policy for older people is simple. First they are people, and they have the same rights and hopes as everyone else. They should be treated fairly and equally in employment, education, healthcare and avenues for enterprise. Ambition should not be shut off just because we get older.

Second, there are certain things they should be able to rely on without the indignity of means testing. The most basic is a universal state pension. We would introduce a Citizen's Pension, paid to all pensioners regardless of contribution record from 2016, so no pensioner will live in poverty. It will pay £180 per week to a single pensioner and £310 per week for a couple, taking all pensioners above the poverty line. Future increases will be at the higher of the price increases of basic goods and services or average earnings.

The failure of private pensions – making pensions secure

Private pension schemes have failed. The £40 billion government subsidy given to private pension schemes in the form of income tax and National Insurance reliefs is huge. The performance of the private pensions industry is dismal – the total paid out in private pensions each year is no more than the subsidy that the government gives the industry. We will begin to reform this. We would raise part of the money needed for the Citizen's Pension by abolishing about half of the value of these concessions; the money is better invested in a better pension for all. We would further limit the amount of relief an individual can get on contributions in any one year, so that more of the subsidy goes to the lower paid.

We would make saving for retirement safe and predictable, by offering a new state earnings-related pension scheme. This would invest through the Green Investment Bank in long-term public assets such as the railways, renewable energy and the National Grid, social and affordable housing, projects sponsored by local authorities, and public facilities such as hospitals. These assets offer a safe, long-term and predictable rate of return – ideal for pensions – and the pension fund will provide the savings needed to invest in these assets. Such public assets would replace pension fund assets, many of which consist of shares in energy companies whose main assets are unusable fossil fuel reserves. Employers would be obliged to offer and contribute to this pension scheme, as they are now with stakeholder pensions; the default would be for employees to be contracted in to the scheme, and a person's contributions would be unaffected by changes of employer.

In addition we will:

- Provide *free social care* funded by taxation on the same basis as the NHS.
- Keep the pensioners' bus pass and Winter Fuel Payment.
- Provide *free prescriptions* for all and abolish the *TV licence*, making the current concessions unnecessary.
- Support enforcing the rights of older people through the *Dignity Code*.
- Make sure that all *pensioners living abroad* receive the same pension and annual pension increase as those living in the UK.
- Support *20 mph zones*, cycle schemes and public transport to make our *streets* safe and useful for older as well as young people.
- Keep the *NHS a public service*, comprehensive and free at the point of delivery, especially recognising that the current generation of older people have paid for it all their lives and are now beginning to need it.

As is traditional, we have listed here items that are specifically in the interests of older people. But we hope and believe that many older people will vote with their children and grandchildren in mind as much as themselves, and that they will in particular have in mind the long-term threats to our climate and environment.

Green councillors look after older people...

In 2012, Green councillor David Brookes was appointed the elderly people's champion for Lancaster City Council and has persuaded the Council to advertise almshouse charity vacancies on its lettings site and to devote a web page to events and issues for the elderly.

In Bradford, Greens secured £300,000 to fund free cavity wall and loft insulation for older residents.

Joining up the policies

So what do health, food, equality and transport have to do with each other? We all know that, to be healthy we need to eat well and take more exercise. So if we promote healthy eating, local food, good free school meals and active transport, we will be healthier. And if we are all more equal, not only will we be healthier but more of us will use public transport and standards will rise. And if as a result we are healthier, we'll be more inclined to get an allotment, walk to the bus stop and get a bus, reducing climate change-producing gases.

It's a virtuous circle.

CHAPTER 6

HEALTH AND WELL-BEING

Imagine a National Health Society. Imagine living in a clean environment, with satisfying work, good housing, a balanced diet, a good education, active, safe and sustainable transport, and much greater equality. This is well-being – so vital to good health. Imagine being in no doubt that the health service is publicly funded, with free prescriptions, dentistry and chiropody; one in which you have a human relationship with your doctors and nurses, who make your care their principal aim. A health service in which individual and local knowledge take the place of protocols and pathways, and free social and nursing care is provided for the elderly; one which prizes prompt and local access to care, and encourages a culture of prevention as well as cure. Imagine a system that respects and trusts health professionals and gives them the time, space, training and rewards to do their job. This could be the real health service; it is the Green Party's joined-up approach to health and well-being.

WE WILL END NHS PRIVATISATION

The Green Party believes healthcare shouldn't be bought and sold. All the other parties have encouraged the marketisation and privatisation of provision and this has led to:

- Fragmentation of services, with patients falling into gaps between providers, and poor communication between clinicians;
- Outsourcing, with companies cutting corners to win contracts;
- Cherry-picking of profitable treatments by private providers, leaving the NHS to provide treatments that are not properly funded; and
- An increase in administration costs of 9% of the NHS budget.

We will maintain a publicly funded, publicly provided health service free at the point of use. Money spent on health will remain in the public economy, supporting the NHS rather than going into private companies' profits.

We will:

- Repeal the Health and Social Care Act 2012, and introduce an NHS Reinstatement Bill
 - restoring the obligation upon the government to provide a comprehensive health service,
 - abolishing competition and the purchaser–provider split,
 - ending market-based commissioning and procurement,
 - re-establishing public bodies, a role for not-for-profit organisations and public accountability,
 - restricting the role of commercial companies, and
 - repealing the right of the Secretary of State to close hospitals or departments without effective public participation.
- Promote transparency by ending *commercial confidentiality*.
- Carry out an investigation into the opaque system of patronage and lobbying that has characterised the privatisation of the NHS.

- Require NHS staff to declare *financial interests* that conflict with their role.
- Stop further *private finance initiative (PFI) contracts* and end the inappropriate sale of NHS assets.
- Seek ways to *buy out existing PFI contracts* where that would represent good value for money, and set aside up to £5 billion over the Parliament to do so.
- Restore the *public sector ethos* of partnership between staff and patients.

Caroline Lucas opposing the Health and Social Care Act 2012 in Parliament:

‘The Bill opens the way for private companies to determine much of English health care and takes away the government’s duties and powers, which is why I believe it should be opposed.’

‘Either we want an NHS free at the point of delivery and with free eye tests and so forth or we do not.’

Caroline has since introduced the NHS Reinstatement Bill.

WE WILL END HEALTH SERVICE AUSTERITY

The Coalition government has not increased funding to keep up with inflation and increasing demand – indeed it has continued ‘efficiency savings’. And money has been diverted into the cost of reorganisation and into profits for the private companies now running many services.

The result is one in four people going to crowded A&E Departments because they could not see a GP quickly enough, and a crisis in mental health care.

International comparisons underline that we can spend more – we spend just 9.6% of GDP on health (including private healthcare), the French 11.7%, the Germans 11.5% and the USA an astonishing 17.6%.

We would:

- Immediately increase the overall *NHS budget by £12 billion a year* to overcome the current funding crisis, increase investment in mental health care and provide for free dentistry, chiropody and prescriptions in England.
- Thereafter, *increase the overall NHS budget annually* in real terms by 1.2% to take account of our ageing population. Together with the previous item this will raise NHS budgets by about £20 billion by 2020.
- Increase *alcohol and tobacco* taxes to help fund the annual increases in NHS spending over the Parliament.
- Provide *free social care as well as free healthcare for older people* along the lines of the report from the Commission on the Future of Health and Social Care in England (Barker report), at an additional cost of around £8 billion a year initially but rising to £9 billion by the end of the Parliament.
- Provide free social care at the *end of life*, enabling dying people to choose where they die.

We would also:

- Provide accessible, *local community health centres* that provide a wide range of services, including out-of-hours care. These will help people access healthcare quickly rather than being a replacement for GPs.
- *End phony patient choice*. For most of us patient choice is much less important than getting good treatment at our local hospital or health centre – which is often, for many, the only practical choice.
- Listen to and work in partnership with *third sector organisations* that are championing patient care.
- Ensure that all *cost-effective treatments* are available to all patients who need them.
- Work to ensure that *cancer* outcomes in the UK are as good as the best in Europe.
- Build systems to measure and improve the *ecological impact* of healthcare, from carbon costings of treatments (building them into the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidelines), to setting targets on recycling in NHS Trusts, and the issue of waste disposal. A colossal amount of material waste is produced through the disposable culture that has taken hold in the fight against hospital-acquired infections.

Green councillors support NHS dentistry...

The market town of Stowmarket, Suffolk, became the first in the county to open a new NHS dentist surgery after a lengthy campaign by Green councillors.

WE WILL ACT TO PREVENT ILLNESS AND EXPAND PRIMARY AND COMMUNITY CARE

The Green Party takes a whole society approach to health. We care about what happens before you access the NHS. Get that right, and a lot else falls into place.

How to achieve this affects how we organise the health service. Those involved in primary and community care – GPs, practice nurses, district nurses, health visitors, midwives, counsellors, pharmacists, occupational therapists and all the other community-based professionals – are best placed to prevent ill health from developing in the first place. They can carry out checks and give advice or treatment to people who, for instance, are stressed, obese, inactive, or alcohol or nicotine dependent. Intervention by a trusted health professional can make the difference at an individual level. This can often be linked to local services, such as advice centres, opportunities for physical activity, lunch clubs and so on.

And it's primary care that is most important in dealing with problems before they become acute and require costly and distressing interventions such as admission to hospital. Local health professionals can also manage chronic illnesses such as diabetes, respiratory and cardiac conditions and mental illness in ways that are both more patient centred and less expensive than hospital-based care. They are best placed too to integrate medical and social care.

Where parents want it and there are no medical complications, normal childbirth could take place at home, increasing satisfaction for the woman in labour and reducing costs for the NHS. Similarly, many people would prefer to spend their last days at home rather than in hospital and a small increase in community care would save hospital beds and make the experience better for the dying patient, their family and friends.

We would therefore place more emphasis on prevention and on primary and community care and less on hospitals.

We would:

- Restore the proportion of *NHS funding for primary care from the present 7% to 2005 levels (11%)* and review the case for increasing it further; we would also ensure that the distribution of funding reflects the local need.
- Always consider whether services currently offered in or by *hospitals* could be transferred to the community.
- Look for *low-tech, local solutions* as well as technical advances.
- Encourage *cooperation* between all the primary care providers, e.g. pharmacies and hearing, optical and old age care organisations.
- Tackle *air pollution*, which causes an estimated 29,000 premature deaths each year in the UK. UK and EU standards on air pollution are out of date, and we would follow more rigorous standards that respect World Health Organization guidelines.
- Give special attention to the well-being of *children* from conception to 2 years old, *the first 1001 days*. For example, there should be national investment in evidence-based parenting programmes in order to improve the life chances of children and the well-being of families, and a free and universal early education and childcare service should be introduced.
- *Extend VAT* at the standard rate to less healthy foods, including sugar, but spend the money raised on subsidising around one-third of the cost of fresh fruit and vegetables. This could prevent around 5,000 premature deaths every year.
- Put a *minimum price on alcohol of 50p per unit*. This will reduce the physical, psychological and social harm associated with problem drinking, and will have only a negligible impact on those who drink in moderation.
- Put the UK at the centre of efforts to end the *AIDS, TB and malaria epidemics* and the threat they pose to the health of women, men and children living in poverty.
- Treat *drug addiction* as a health problem rather than a crime, making drugs policy the responsibility of the Department of Health in order to ensure that resources are targeted at supporting, not punishing, drug users.
- Adopt an evidence-based approach to the step-by-step regulation, starting with cannabis, of the drugs currently banned under the *Misuse of Drugs Act* as well as 'legal highs', with a view to introducing a system that reduces harms and brings the market under state control as a potential tax revenue generator. A Royal Commission or similar body would be established to review currently controlled drug classifications, within a legalised environment of drug use.
- Introduce a regime of presumed consent for *organ donation*, which respects the right of relatives to refuse consent.

- Provide the right to an *assisted death* within a rigorous framework of regulation and in the context of the availability of the highest level of palliative care.
- End *mixed-sex accommodation* in hospitals.
- Improve *hospital food*.

Green councillors will stand up to fast-food chains...

After KFC applied to open a drive-through store close to a primary school in Solihull, Green councillor Andy Hodgson persuaded the Council to toughen up its planning rules to allow refusal of fast-food chains near schools.

WE WILL RESTORE A PERSON-CENTRED APPROACH TO THE NHS

The Green Party listens to knowledge and experience, not political dogma

The introduction to this sub-section has been written by Dr Jillian Creasy, who worked as a GP in Sheffield for 25 years. It draws on her real experience of the NHS over that time. Jillian is also Green Party Health Spokesperson and candidate for Sheffield Central.

Patient care has been damaged by two policies:

1. punitive governance based on arbitrary targets;
2. over-management by numbers to achieve those targets, leading to a climate of fear among managers and frustration among professionals.

The NHS should have the needs of the patient at its heart. Ultimately, healthcare is provided by a professional to a person in need. Every interaction should begin by connecting with that person to really understand their needs. Interventions – from simple advice or booking an appointment, to planning complex medical treatment – will then be more appropriate and efficient, of real value to the user and economic for the organisation.

The NHS has been subjected to 20 years of ideological tampering by successive governments (marketisation, targets and performance-related pay) to the point where professionals are often prevented from responding appropriately to an individual's needs. This has also driven up the cost of care. Fragmentation of care, especially outsourcing, has led to a loss of continuity, so the human relationship between professional and patient is diluted. Professionals can no longer make the overall care of the patient their primary aim. Huge amounts of time and money are wasted on 'failure demand' – where the patient goes round in circles trying to get an answer to their problem and often has unnecessary investigations and treatment.

More problems are created by so-called 'economies of scale' where, in an attempt to emulate industry, common services have been merged into larger entities regardless of the nature of the variety of demand. Individual and local knowledge are lost and problems are dealt with according to protocols and pathways, not what is best for the patient. This has to change. The system must be designed around what the patient needs, not what Monitor (the sector regulator for health services in England) or the Care Quality Commission demand. Professionals must be given the time to care, rather than ticking governance boxes.

The 'human-centred' approach also applies to NHS staff. The vast majority of NHS workers are highly committed, caring and careful individuals, but current systems often put them under stress and prevent them doing the right thing. We need a culture in which all staff are able to shape the system they work in and to openly share learning from mistakes and 'near misses'. It should be a source of pride and joy, not fear and frustration, for those who work in it.

The Green Party would:

- Place the *quality of patient care*, especially patient safety, at the heart of the system. Reducing costs would not be the primary driver of behaviour but would be the outcome of best practice.
- Evolve the *best system of care* with the help of the service providers.
- *Engage, empower and hear patients* and carers at all times, treating both with dignity.
- Foster whole-heartedly the growth, development and *training* of all staff, including their involvement in improving the systems in which they work.

- Embrace *transparency* in the interests of sharing best practice, accountability and cooperation.
- Use *quantitative data* to better understand how the system is working, not to set targets, and to see them as a route to continuously improving patient care, not an end in themselves.
- Ensure that there are clear lines of *responsibility*, especially for safety and interdepartmental cooperation.
- Respect the NHS Pay Review Body and bring *NHS pay* back in line with inflation and negotiate improved conditions.
- Expand the workforce to drive the wholesale improvement of *mental health services*.

The extra funding proposed for the NHS and social care will create a total of *400,000 jobs*.

WE WILL TACKLE THE CRISIS OF OUR TIME: MENTAL HEALTH

There has been an alarming rise in mental health problems in recent years, especially among young people. According to NHS England, mental illness accounts for 28% of illness but only 13% of NHS spending. In the course of a year, one in four adults experiences some form of mental ill health. If you have diabetes there's a 92% chance you'll get treatment. If you have a mental illness, that chance goes down to 28%. Around 70% of prisoners have two or more mental health conditions. The government's own Chief Medical Officer says mental health should be given greater priority.

It will take time to train more staff and expand services but the Green Party will put an end to mental health's Cinderella status and achieve parity of esteem by 2020.

We will:

- Ensure that *spending on mental health care* rises within our overall commitment to increase real spending on health.
- Ensure that no one waits more than 28 days for access to talking therapies.
- Ensure that everyone experiencing *a mental health crisis*, including children and young people, should have safe and speedy access to quality care, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.
- The use of police cells as 'places of safety' for children should be eliminated by 2016, and by the end of the next Parliament should only occur for adults in exceptional circumstances.
- Ensure that everyone who requires a *mental health bed* should be able to access one in their local NHS Trust area, unless they need specialist care and treatment. If specialist care is required, then this should be provided within a reasonable distance of where the patient lives.
- Implement a campaign to end the *discrimination and stigma* associated with mental health through supporting the Time for Change programme and offering employment support to those with mental health problems.
- Invest in *dementia* services, ensuring that support is available for all affected by this debilitating disease, including families and carers.
- Pay special attention to any mental health issues of *mothers* during and after pregnancy, *children and adolescents*, *Black and Minority Ethnic* people, *refugees*, the *LGBTIQ communities* and *ex-service* people and their families.
- Improve access to *addiction* services, including both drugs and alcohol addiction.
- Give higher priority to the *physical* healthcare of those with mental health problems.

Joining up the policies

So what do mental health, drugs, crime and welfare have to do with each other? Our current welfare system breeds desperation and stress, not security, causing mental health problems. Ending workfare and making work pay better will bring security and encourage better mental health. Mental health problems foster drug dependency and crime. If we can improve mental health, drug use and crime rates will fall. With lower drug use and crime, and a supportive welfare system, more people will find useful things to do, improving their mental health.

It's another virtuous circle.

CHAPTER 7

A PLACE TO LEARN: EDUCATION

Imagine free universal early education and childcare, with compulsory education starting at 7. Smaller classes and free nutritious lunches. More opportunity for outdoor education. More trust in teachers. Less teaching to the test and the abolition of SATS and league tables. Accountability at local level. Apprenticeships for 16–25 year olds who want them. The restoration of the Education Maintenance Allowance for 16–17 year olds and the abolition of university tuition fees. Imagine schools and colleges fit for children and young adults. Education is good for each of us, but it is also good for all of us – it's a common good. That's why the Green Party will make education free for everyone up to and including university or equivalent.

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION AND CHILDCARE

Although the single most important factor for a child's development is the learning environment at home, high-quality pre-school education can make a big difference. The government has focused on lower-quality childcare, which has little or no effect. Moreover, disadvantaged children who attend settings with children from mixed social backgrounds make more progress than those in settings serving mainly disadvantaged children. These findings are why we want to create a universal high-quality early years education system used by everyone, to give every child the best possible start.

Great credit is due to the previous Labour government for its Sure Start children's centres. But too many of these have closed as a result of austerity. Although support for childcare has grown under the Coalition, the government provides scant support to parents in the first two years of a child's life, and too much of the emphasis for the next three years is on expanding free and subsidised childcare so that parents, especially women, can work. Too little attention is paid to the child and to the value of early education.

The Green Party proposes to extend the education system to provide a free, universal and flexible system of good-quality early education and support for parents from birth until the age of compulsory education.

We would:

- Build a free but voluntary universal *early education and childcare service* for all children from birth until compulsory education age, which we would raise to 7 years.
- Integrate this into the local education service, run by *local education authorities*, and build on existing infant schools. Local authorities would be given freedom as to how to do so in the light of their local circumstances.

- Ensure that the system includes *children's centres* for the very youngest children and their parents, and childcare and early education for children from age 1.
- Ensure that those who lead early years education are *qualified teachers* with qualified teacher status and with *specialist knowledge of early years education*; and ensure all other staff are qualified to level 3.
- Encourage *parents* to participate in helping to run the service.
- Ensure that parents would receive much increased Child Benefit from 2016 and would continue to receive *Statutory Maternity and Paternity Pay*.

We estimate that in the longer run this will cost around £8 billion a year over and above the cost of the existing free and subsidised schemes and tax concessions, which would be abolished.

SCHOOLS

Teachers feel undervalued and their professionalism is undermined by a strict curriculum. Two-fifths of teachers quit within five years of beginning their careers, ground down by an excessive workload, much of it unrelated to teaching.

The Green Party believes that children are over-assessed and teachers are over-regulated. Teaching to the test is not satisfying teaching and it's boring for students, yet that's what successive governments have obliged teachers to do. We need to free teachers and pupils to rediscover the excitement of learning, released from the shackles of a system designed with only economic competitiveness and preparation for work in mind, and with excessive teacher workloads burdened by bureaucracy.

We are determined to make schools fit for children rather than the other way round. In line with Green Party principles, decisions around education will be taken at the most local level possible, but in general we support:

- Democratic accountability and a key role for *local authorities* in planning, admissions policy and equality of access for children with special needs.
- A *comprehensive system* of local schools offering mixed-ability teaching and staffed by qualified teachers, and the integration of *grammar schools* into the comprehensive system.
- *Restoring education current and capital funding* to 2010 levels in real terms (costing around £7 billion a year) and distributing it fairly among local authorities, reflecting the core costs of education, pupil needs, the quality of existing school buildings and equity between school types. With the new early education service above, and counting the expansion of apprenticeships below this, would create around a quarter of a million jobs.
- Action to reduce teacher *workload* and introduce professional *pay* levels for all teachers.
- Ending the *marketisation* and outsourcing of education.
- Leaving local education authorities free to decide how much to allocate to *current* spending and how much to *capital* projects.
- *Class sizes of 20*, costing £1.5 billion over the Parliament.
- The integration of *academies and free schools* into the local authority system.
- Academic learning from 6 years old, with earlier years education focusing on play, social cohesion and confidence-building, and *compulsory education* beginning at age 7.
- The abolition of *SATS and league tables* and the evaluation of schools by parents, teachers and the local community, not *Ofsted* (the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills), which we would abolish, reducing the accountability-related workload.
- A broad, balanced and enriching *curriculum*, including creative and vocational areas, and making PSHE (including sex and relationships education, and also first aid) compulsory, with a coherent 16–19 qualifications framework allowing a real choice of academic and vocational areas, or a mixture of them.
- An increase in *outdoor education and physical activity* so children establish an early and strong relationship with their local environment.
- The right for every child who is *disabled to a mainstream education*.
- The removal of charitable status from *private schools*, with a view to absorbing them into the state system, but nevertheless ensuring that no schools are run for profit.
- We will phase out public funding of *schools run by religious organisations*. Schools may teach about religions, but should not encourage adherence to any particular religious beliefs.
- *Home* education and flexi-schooling.

- *Free nutritious lunches*, with local and GM-free ingredients, and children involved in growing, preparing and cooking food where possible. The number of infants eating school lunches since the current free meals were introduced has increased from just 300,000 to 1,640,530 now. The extension will cost an additional £2 billion a year.
- Ensuring that all schools that serve particular *vulnerable communities*, for example the Jewish, Muslim or Sikh communities, are adequately protected from *sectarian attacks*.
- An end to the trend whereby parents have to buy as *extras* equipment needed at school or for participation on expensive school trips.

Caroline Lucas on personal, social, health and economic education

In Parliament, Green MP Caroline Lucas led on making sure that all young people get taught high-quality PSHE (personal, social, health and economic education). She introduced a Bill in Parliament to require all schools to teach the subject and for teachers to get proper training and support. Good PSHE is key to ending violence against women and girls and also has significant knock-on benefits for both academic attainment and future employability. Statutory PSHE is supported by the National Union of Teachers, Mumsnet, Stonewall, Girlguiding, Everyday Sexism and the Royal College of Nursing, among others.

FURTHER EDUCATION AND SKILLS TRAINING

We will:

- Oppose the *privatisation* of further education and return further education colleges to the democratic control of local government.
- Reverse the trend whereby 45% of *apprenticeships*, that is, jobs with structured training, are now taken by people over 25. We would reinstate the government's duty to provide an apprenticeship to all qualified young people aged 16–19 who do not have one and want one, but extend it to age 25, and increase funding for apprenticeships by 30%.
- Restore the *Education Maintenance Allowance* for 16 and 17 year olds.
- Provide the further education sector with *£1.5 billion a year extra funding*.
- Connect universities with local schools and colleges through nationwide *Widening Participation* programmes.
- Encourage local authorities to use some of the additional money we propose to give to them to restore a full range of *local adult education* programmes.
- End the anomaly whereby schools and academies can *reclaim VAT* on goods and services whereas sixth form colleges and further education colleges cannot, by allowing the latter to claim, costing around £170 million a year.
- Prioritise training in the *skills needed to build a low-carbon economy*.

Greens in power carry out our policies

Education in Brighton & Hove was for long a major concern to parents in the city, but since the Greens came to office results have improved. The 2013 GCSE results were the best ever, though they fell in 2014 after tougher marking was introduced across the country. 'A' level results continued to improve in 2014. And 80% of sixth forms and colleges are good or outstanding as judged by Ofsted.

HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher education is in crisis. The fundamental purpose of universities should be to promote critical enquiry, social innovation and cultural renewal. But these aims have been sidelined in an atmosphere of increasing managerialism and commercialisation.

Higher education is vital to our cultural health. It should be concerned with public engagement and increasing social participation, not considered merely a production line for enhancing the earning power of individuals. The current focus on research ‘outputs’ – in the narrow definition used by the Research Excellence Framework – means that the crucial role of lecturers as teachers has been denigrated. This emphasis needs to be reversed.

The Conservative-led Coalition and the Labour Party bear responsibility for the current system of university funding, which is largely dependent on tuition fees that now stand at £9,000 a year for undergraduates. This was a betrayal of a promise and has blighted the future of thousands of young people who now graduate with a debt of at least £45,000.

With the removal of public funding from most undergraduate and all postgraduate courses, UK universities are now all but privatised. The only people to benefit from the current system are university Vice-Chancellors and senior bureaucrats, who award themselves massive pay rises, while those on the ground who carry out teaching and research face ever more punishing terms and conditions of employment. In practice, this severely compromises the quality of education through reduced student-contact hours with overstretched staff.

Zero-hours contracts are now commonplace and shocking disparities in pay characterise every campus, especially among service workers, who are commonly denied a living wage. Conversely, university administrative departments continue to swell as money is routinely wasted on copying expensive private sector practices – including ludicrous rebranding exercises – in search of ‘market share’. The future of the arts and the humanities has been endangered by a systematic denigration by the dominant political parties and university administrations alike, who create a perception of such courses as an expensive luxury without the vocational ‘use-value’ that renders them worth the financial risk. The Green Party believes that the arts and humanities have an essential part to play in creating a more democratic, sane and participatory society.

The situation for mature students is even more dire. Over the past five years, every continuing education department in the UK has been scaled back or closed down altogether, often as a managerial response to caps on students numbers and diminished funding for the sector as a whole. Adults wishing to return to education are faced with a situation where short courses and part-time study are considered not cost-effective in market terms.

In December 2010, just after the trebling of tuition fees, Caroline Lucas MP argued that the costs of a free higher education could be met by increasing corporation tax for larger companies to the level paid in other G7 countries and ring-fencing some of that money. Businesses depend enormously on graduates’ skills and knowledge, so it’s only fair that they invest in the higher education system from which they benefit.

Allied to this, the cost of studying the qualifications that universities stipulate as entry requirements is prohibitive. An ‘A’ level for those who are not registered as school or college students attracts a fee of several hundred pounds. Access to education diplomas are also meshed within a loan system for those over the age of 24, and uniformly cost in excess of £3,000. The part-time and short courses for which non-traditional applicants can enrol are often hugely expensive, especially when measured against the contact-time with lecturers.

‘Lifelong Learning’ is a phrase that is much used by politicians and education professionals. Giving people the opportunity to be ‘second chance’ learners should be a crucial part of what universities offer to wider society. Countering the monetisation of higher education across the entire sector is vital to reverse the destructive and wasteful market model of university education.

The Green Party would address this through:

- Ending undergraduate *tuition fees*. We appreciate that the current level of applications to study at university reflects the paucity of other opportunities available to young people. This is part of a wider social problem that must be tackled. To be saddled with a huge debt for the right to access higher education at the beginning or middle of adulthood is neither ethical nor sustainable. Because of the way the student loans system works this would cost about £4.5 billion over this Parliament, and in the long run around £8 billion a year.
- *Cancelling student debt* issued by the Student Loans Company and held by the government. Taking account of the loans that it is expected would never be re-paid, the total value of these loans is estimated to be around £30 billion. Assuming that these loans would be paid off over the next 25 years, and taking account of interest, this amounts to around £2.2 billion a year in revenue that the government would not receive.
- Reintroducing student grants costing £2.2 billion over the Parliament. In the longer run we would support *student living costs* through the Basic Income.
- In the longer term, considering scrapping fees for *academic postgraduate courses*.
- Restoring access to *lifelong learning* by supporting mature students and their families. We will reverse the 20-year programme of dismantling the lifelong learning sector.
- *Reintroducing the block grant* to universities. It is essential that teaching and learning can be supported effectively across the sciences and the humanities.
- Encouraging universities and pension funds such as the Universities Superannuation Scheme to *divest* from fossil fuel companies. This would follow the example of the University of Glasgow.
- Supporting the *10:1 'fair pay campus' campaign*. We are committed to ending the scandal of Vice-Chancellors paying themselves £300,000 a year while cleaners on the national minimum wage have to resort to food banks.

Green councillors support apprenticeships...

Greens in Brighton have made it standard practice for apprenticeships and training schemes to be included in all Council construction contracts.

CHAPTER 8

A PLACE TO LIVE: HOUSING

Want to rent? Want to buy? Struggling to do either? It doesn't have to be this way. The Green Party has policies to make housing affordable and sustainable, to make sure there is enough to go round, and to provide better quality and greater security in the private rented sector. A secure and affordable place to live is one of our most basic human needs. But houses and flats are now sites of speculation rather than simply somewhere to call home. They were at the heart of the crash seven years ago, when reckless lending left banks unable to support themselves. We need to return housing to its original purpose: providing us – each and every one of us – with affordable and sustainable shelter.

There are three reasons for the current chaos and unfairness:

- A misplaced faith in the market as the way to meet housing needs, where the market for houses has too often reflected a desire to make an investment rather than buy a place to live, and prices have risen faster than inflation;
- A lack of investment in public housing for at least 20 years, following Right to Buy and restrictions on what local authorities can do; and
- A private rented sector where too often people have insecurity of tenure and are being charged extortionate rents for unsatisfactory housing.

Caroline Lucas and housing

In July 2014 Caroline Lucas MP introduced a Housing (Affordability, Supply and Tenant Protection) Bill to highlight the problems faced by private tenants.

The Bill required the Secretary of State to commission a programme of research into reducing rent levels in the private rented sector, improving terms and conditions for tenants, increasing housing supply, and providing a large-scale programme of sustainable council housing in England.

Caroline has published a Housing Charter, suggesting how these national policies would help in Brighton. You can find it here: [http://www.carolinelucas.com/assets/files/localparties/brighton/publications/Caroline/Caroline%20Lucas%20Housing%20Charter%20\(2\).pdf](http://www.carolinelucas.com/assets/files/localparties/brighton/publications/Caroline/Caroline%20Lucas%20Housing%20Charter%20(2).pdf); or <http://tinyurl.com/m8xh4g3>

THE HOUSING MARKET: HOUSE PRICE STABILITY

House prices continue to rise quicker than wages and inflation, and first-time buyers find it almost impossible to buy a home. If wages had gone up by as much as house prices since 1997, the average person would be earning almost £30,000 more a year.

When house prices crash there are consequences for the whole economy.

The Green Party will aim for house price stability by making property investment and speculation less attractive and by increasing housing supply. We will:

- Give the Bank of England the powers it has requested to *limit the size of mortgages* in relation to the property value and the borrower's income.
- Take steps to ensure that *development is more evenly distributed* across the whole of the country, so reducing pressure on housing in the South East in particular.
- Make '*buy to let*' less attractive, so reducing pressure on house prices, by removing tax incentives, including the deduction of mortgage interest as an expense, and reforming the 'wear and tear' allowance.
- Introduce new *higher Council Tax bands* for more expensive homes, with higher rates for empty homes.
- Scrap the government's *Help to Buy* scheme, which does nothing to help those in the greatest housing need and contributes to excessive demand, saving £600 million a year.
- Take action on *empty homes* to bring them back into use. There are about 700,000 empty homes. Halve this number through Empty Property Use Orders.
- Gradually *phase out Stamp Duty Land Tax* and consider a Land Value Tax.
- Minimise encroachment onto undeveloped '*greenfield sites*' wherever possible by reusing previously developed sites that have fallen into disuse.
- Reduce VAT on housing renovation and repair work (including insulation) to 5%, costing £1.6 billion a year. At present there is no VAT on constructing new dwellings but there is VAT at 20% on converting and renovating old buildings to be used as homes. This encourages new building at the expense of saving land and using what we have.
- Introduce the *right to rent* (where local councils step in to help those in difficulty with their mortgage to rent their home). One-third of mortgage borrowers are expected to struggle if interest rates increase by 2%.
- Break up the big builder cartels and *diversify the house-building industry* so that more homes are built by small- and medium-sized builders and by community-led and cooperative initiatives. In the short term we would achieve this by measures including bringing transparency to the land market, the transfer of public land into community land trusts, and parcelling big regeneration sites into smaller plots through the Custom Build model.

PUBLIC HOUSING: PROVIDING 500,000 NEW SOCIAL RENTED HOMES

Successive governments' affordable and social housing policies have failed. There is not enough housing for those unable to afford either to buy or to pay market rents. The time has come to reverse the decline of council housing, started by the 'Right to Buy'.

We would:

- Provide 500,000 social rented homes to high sustainability standards by increasing the social housing budget from £1.5 billion a year to £6 billion a year in the lifetime of the Parliament, removing borrowing caps from local councils, and creating 35,000 jobs.
- Devolve *Housing Benefit* budgets to councils, so they can design packages that improve access to housing in their local market and enable them to provide more council housing.
- End mass council house sales and the *Right to Buy* at a discounted price.
- Provide more rights for *homeless people*, giving local authorities the same duties with regard to single people and childless couples as to families, and ending the practice of declaring people 'intentionally homeless'. Aim to end rough sleeping completely, and give public authorities a duty to prevent it.
- Oppose new *arm's length management organisations* and ensure genuine tenant participation in existing ones.

Greens in power carry out our housing policies

In Green-led Brighton:

- In November 2012 Brighton Council introduced a new licensing scheme by which private landlords letting a property for sharing by three or more people must bring it up to an agreed standard. More than 1,500 licences were applied for by April 2014.
- By July 2014 the Green-led Council had brought some 416 council homes and more than 460 empty private homes back into use.
- By November 2014 Greens had overseen the delivery of 389 affordable homes (as part of wider residential and mixed developments). Another 130 are due to be completed before May 2015.
- In the Green Party's term of administration it will have overseen the building of 639 homes. A further 681 affordable homes, including more than 200 new council homes, are in the development pipeline.
- For the first time in living memory, communal heating bills in some Brighton & Hove Council blocks have fallen as Council tenants benefit from a major programme of energy efficiency retro-fitting.

MAKE RENTING NORMAL AND NOT A RIP-OFF

There is a place for a private rented sector. But experience shows that it needs to be well regulated and the difference in power between landlord and tenant corrected. We would:

- *Reform the private rented sector* by introducing a 'living rent' tenancy (including five-year fixed tenancy agreements), smart rent control that caps annual rent increases linked to the Consumer Price Index, security of tenancy and local not-for-profit letting agencies, and abolishing letting agents' fees and insurance-based deposit schemes.
- Set up a *Living Rent Commission* to explore whether controls could bring rents more in line with local average incomes.
- Introduce a mandatory *licensing scheme for landlords*.
- Abolish landlord perks, such as *tax deductions* against a variety of expenditures, including mortgage interest relief. Ending mortgage interest tax relief alone will raise £5.8 billion a year.
- Increase the supply of small lets by raising the tax-free amount under the *Rent a Room Scheme* to £7,250 a year.
- Abolish the '*bedroom tax*', which has saved less than £400 million a year. A Department for Work and Pensions report found that more than half of affected tenants have cut back on essentials, and only 1 in 20 has downsized.
- Bring *Housing Benefit* for all age groups back *in line with average market rents*, so that it provides all citizens with the means to meet their housing costs, costing £2.3 billion a year.
- Subject the *Shared Accommodation Rate* to a comprehensive review to ensure it reflects the real cost of renting shared properties.
- Change the *definition of affordable rented housing* to depend on local median incomes and not on local market rents.

The 'bedroom tax'

The 'under occupancy charge' – the bedroom tax – came into effect in April 2013.

- It affects nearly 500,000 people – the equivalent of a city the size of Leicester.
- Two-thirds of those affected are disabled.
- Cash-strapped housing associations have spent millions helping affected tenants.
- By February 2014, two-thirds of residents hit by the bedroom tax were in rent arrears.
- The Tories devised it, the Lib Dems backed it and Ed Miliband took a year to decide he didn't like it.
- Green MP Caroline Lucas has voted against the bedroom tax at every opportunity.

Green councillors and homelessness...

In Solihull, Green councillor Chris Williams publicised the plight of a woman who had just had a heart transplant and her 14-year-old daughter who were forced to live in a private hotel for 18 months with rats running through their room as they slept. Since then Solihull has reduced the use of B&Bs to house the homeless.

CHAPTER 9

CREATING 'COMMON WEALTH': WORK, MONEY, INDUSTRY AND TAX

Imagine a world of sustainable prosperity for all, one in which secure, satisfying, decently paid jobs are the norm. Where the power to create money is taken out of private hands and democratised for public benefit. Imagine going to a People's Bank, confident that it is working for you rather than for its shareholders. Imagine that you and everyone else are being taxed with fairness and sustainability in mind, and that tax is actually collected. Imagine working in a more mixed and localised economy. Imagine a revival of workers' rights and vibrant trade unions. Imagine knowing that almost half of national income is spent on the common good – on the ties that bind us together – rather than on paying down debts you didn't cause.

This is the common wealth we create by working together, sharing the fruits of our work fairly and building the infrastructure of our common life. Right now, society is too unequal, too much valuable work goes unrecognised, and our infrastructure is not fit for a common and sustainable life. The Green Party's proposals will make for a fairer and more sustainable society.

WORK

People want to work and the Green Party believes in helping make that happen. We also believe everyone should be properly paid for the work they do, ending working poverty and the job insecurity that has people lining up outside food banks and left at the mercy of payday lenders. We don't just need jobs, we need more worthwhile secure jobs.

Under the Coalition, 1 million jobs have been lost from the public sector – from the NHS, from schools and colleges, from local government, from the institutions that bind us together, from front-line services. We will put them back.

The Coalition claims to have created 2.5 million jobs in the private sector to compensate. But:

- Many job-market casualties have turned to self-employment, where life can be precarious and salaries low (there has been a 20% fall in the salaries of the self-employed since 2007, compared with a 6% fall in employee earnings);
- 15% of the workforce is self-employed. For some this is by choice, for others it is because they can't get better work;
- Many new jobs are insecure, poorly paid and with contracts that fail to balance the rights and responsibilities of employers and employees;
- The young in particular suffer, with one in three young workers now on low pay; and
- They've redefined some jobs out of the public and into the private sector.

In place of this workplace lottery, the Green Party proposes a package for sustainable prosperity: ending austerity, expanding and renewing public services such as social care, transport and social housing, investing in energy conservation and sustainable resource use, and promoting green public works for environmental benefit. This will create 1 million new satisfying jobs and training places within a year.

Green councillors support the living wage...

In Lewisham, Norwich, Lancashire, Camden, Worcester, Stroud and Brighton & Hove, minority Green councillors successfully campaigned for a living wage to help tackle poverty.

We will:

- Increase the minimum wage so that it is a *living wage*. We propose a minimum wage target for everyone who is working in the UK of £10 per hour by 2020. In 2015 this would mean a minimum wage of £8.10 an hour generally (and £9.40 in London), saving £2.4 billion a year in tax credits and generating an additional £1.5 billion a year in income tax and National Insurance. This would be offset by £0.7 billion a year additional costs in the public sector.
- Revive the role of democratic *trade unions*, including the right to belong to a union and have the employer recognise it, and the right to take industrial action, including strikes and peaceful picketing.
- Phase in a *35-hour week*. Apart from improving the quality of our lives, this would combat unemployment by sharing available work out more equitably.
- Provide a comprehensive nationwide system of good-quality pre-school *early education and childcare*, free at the point of delivery.
- End exploitative *zero-hours contracts*.
- End the exploitation of *interns*, and ensure no unpaid full-time internship lasts more than four weeks.
- Make *equal pay* for men and women a reality.
- Introduce a *maximum pay ratio of 10:1* between the best paid and the worst paid in every organisation.
- End *blacklisting*. We will set up a full investigation into blacklisting in the construction industry and consider the creation of a new criminal offence.
- Give *workers a greater say* in the running of their companies, including employee-elected directors in medium and larger companies.
- *Reduce Employment Tribunal fees* so that tribunals are accessible to workers.

Greens in power carry out our policies

The Green-led administration in Brighton cut the chief executive's salary and raised the pay of the lowest grades, bringing the ratio between the highest and lowest paid Council staff to just over 10:1.

FINANCE

The UK finance industry is a disaster area. Far from generating genuine wealth, its recklessness and greed created the greatest recession since the 1930s, which in turn contributed to the present regime of austerity and cuts to public services.

It has presided over other failures, from the mis-selling of endowment mortgages and payment protection insurance, to the appallingly low returns and high charges of the state-subsidised private pensions industry, its failure to mobilise long-term finance for renewable energy and its collusion in and creation of a whole industry of tax avoidance and evasion.

Meanwhile, those who work in the industry at senior level show no signs of remorse and continue to pocket huge salaries and bonuses. Finance needs root and branch reform. We would:

- Move towards *creating all national currency* through a national monetary authority, answerable to Parliament. The power to create money must be taken out of the hands of private banks. Detailed proposals are set out in the 'Regaining control of our money' box.
- Separate *retail and investment banking*. Retail banks should be required to limit their role to taking deposits and making loans that facilitate economic activity; investment banks should take the form of partnerships rather than limited companies.
- Introduce *controls on bank lending*.
- Act to *control payday lenders* and offer alternatives (see the 'Greens in power' credit union box).
- We will use the government-owned *Royal Bank of Scotland to create a network of local banks* for every city and region, ensuring that each bank is a People's Bank, obliged to offer cheap basic banking services.

- Invest £2 billion in a network of *community banks*, mutually owned and serving local areas or particular groups.
- Expand the role and the funds of the *Green Investment Bank* by offering green Individual Savings Accounts and pensions, allowing the bank to borrow and boosting the equity in the bank by £9 billion over the Parliament.
- Introduce a *Robin Hood tax* (a financial transaction tax) to reduce destabilising speculation (see the ‘Taxes’ section below for details).
- Work for the abolition of the *City of London Corporation* and the special statuses it enjoys.

Greens in power carry out our policies

The Green-led administration in Brighton invested £100,000 in a local credit union, partly to help it set up an online system for residents to access loans, making the credit union as accessible as high-interest payday lenders. It also banned such lenders from advertising on Council billboards.

In 2013 Green MP Caroline Lucas worked with East Sussex Credit Union to show ministers how to help credit unions fulfil their potential by, for example, ending the restrictions that put them at a competitive disadvantage when compared with banks.

Regaining control of our money

One of the most fundamental tasks of government is maintenance of the currency. Without stable money accepted by all we can't buy and sell things or plan for the future. Inflation in particular makes it hard to take the long-term view that the environmental crisis demands.

Most people believe that our money is currently created by the nationalised Bank of England. It isn't. A pound in your bank account is no more than a promise by the bank to pay you that pound; you don't actually *own* any publicly created money. In fact, commercial banks create new money (in the sense of money in bank accounts) whenever they make loans, and that money disappears when the loan is paid back.

The fact that the size of our money supply – the total amount of money in circulation – is dependent upon millions of separate commercial lending decisions by banks makes it hard to maintain economic stability. During the great recession of the past few years, the unwillingness of banks to make new loans and the desire of people to pay down their debts has meant that the money supply has shrunk, and the government has had to resort to the emergency policy of printing money (called ‘quantitative easing’) to prevent an even worse slump.

We believe that the time has come to recognise that the creation of currency and the control of the money supply is far too important to be left to profit-seeking private sector banks and should be brought back under the democratic control of the state. Quantitative easing was but a first step. Commercial banks should be no more than the custodians of publicly created money in current accounts, and the creation of that money should become the function of a new monetary authority, independent of day-to-day government control. This policy would protect ordinary bank accounts, and

- allow banks to fail safely
- separate ordinary and investment business
- provide some control on overall lending and debt

This would be a massive and complex change to our banking system, with many ramifications, and its implementation, involving many years of consultation, legislation and the creation of transitional arrangements, would not be appropriate for one Parliament. But we would take the first steps of preparing detailed proposals and consulting upon them, and Green MPs will press this issue in the next Parliament.

The change to the new system would create a new and substantial cash flow for the government, which could be spent on social and environmental priorities and assist in paying down the national debt.

CHANGING ECONOMIC ORGANISATIONS

Most economic activity takes place in limited companies, many of them vast multinational organisations. The way they are run has a huge effect on our lives, yet their workers, customers and suppliers have no say in them. Even shareholders are often remote, and their connection with a company, and responsibility for what it has done, can be severed overnight by the simple act of selling their shares.

The economy would be better, more stable and more responsive if there was (a) much greater diversity of economic models and (b) more control by those most directly involved in some of the economic organisations we already have. We would:

- Encourage *small firms*, which are more embedded in their local communities and provide less opportunity for creating huge disparities of income and wealth.
- Amend company law to ensure that medium and large companies take account of and report on the *environmental and social impact* of their activities.
- Amend company law to ensure that medium and large companies have *employee and consumer representatives* on their boards.
- Ensure that *Companies House* actually collects data due from companies and has accurate data on their *beneficial ownership*.
- Set *local authorities* free to run local enterprises for their own communities.
- Support *social enterprise*.
- Introduce a *cooperative development fund* managed by community banks to finance new and expanding cooperatives, alongside a much more comprehensive nationwide network of cooperative development bodies providing the necessary education, training and legal support.
- Grant employees the legal right in certain circumstances to buy out their companies (funded by the Green Investment Bank) and turn them into *workers' cooperatives*; or, for example, grant the right to turn sporting clubs, in particular football clubs, into community and supporter cooperatives by giving powers for season ticket holders backed by the local community to take over the running of a club.
- Expand *cooperative education*, teaching young people the history of cooperatives as well as how to set them up in practice. We will ensure business qualifications will give the same emphasis to cooperative and mutual business models as to other private enterprises.

SMALL FIRMS AND THE LOCAL ECONOMY

The UK economy needs to be more local. Transporting basic foodstuffs all over the planet when they can be grown and sold near to home adds to greenhouse gas emissions and reduces security of supply. Local businesses are more responsive to local communities and are often better employers than remote, large ones. Income differences are smaller in small firms. If poorer people are better off, they tend to spend their extra income locally. So Greens champion small businesses and the local economy, and our Green MP Caroline Lucas was an official Parliamentary champion of the Federation of Small Businesses.

We will:

- Make it easier for small businesses to employ people and contribute towards paying the living wage by using receipts from a wealth tax to reduce *employers' National Insurance* in the longer run to 8%.
- Improve the competitive position of small firms, maintaining *corporation tax* for small firms at 20% while raising that for larger firms to 30%.
- Increase access to *finance* by investing £2 billion in a network of community banks, mutually owned and serving local areas or particular groups.
- Reduce the tax on conviviality and help small businesses in the *tourism and restaurant* businesses by *lowering VAT to the reduced rate (5%)* for cooked food, entertainment and accommodation, costing £6 billion a year.
- Keep *trade local* by allowing local authorities to favour local procurement to help their local economy.
- Ensure that legislation requiring that small businesses should be *paid on time* is properly enforced.
- In the longer run, simplify *PAYE* through our Basic Income proposals.
- Encourage greater *diversity among entrepreneurs*, including young people, women, ex-service people, the previously unemployed, people who are disabled and older people.

- Ensure that the great majority of honest small businesses can compete fairly with the less scrupulous by *cracking down on tax evasion*, especially in the informal economy and through non-payment of VAT.
- Give BT and other public telecommunications operators an obligation to provide *affordable high-speed broadband-capable infrastructure* to every small business.

Green MEP lobbies for VAT exemption for small firms

Molly Scott Cato MEP has been lobbying in Europe for VAT exemption for micro-businesses. This follows new European VAT rules on digital products sold in the EU making VAT chargeable in the place of purchase rather than in the place of supply. Micro-businesses are now therefore obliged to collect VAT from up to 28 different EU states at 75 different rates. Rules designed to ensure that corporations pay fair taxes have entangled many tiny enterprises, and the complexity of administration involved is putting them at risk. Molly has called for a VAT exemption for businesses with a turnover of less than €100,000 across the whole of Europe. Many micro-businesses have welcomed her intervention; small businesses are responsible for around 80% of jobs across the EU.

TAXES

Tax is not a punishment and it is not stealing by the state. It is our money, spent on our behalf by the government we elect. Tax redistributes wealth and pays for services that are important to us all. There are services we share but don't always use, such as roads, healthcare and schools. We don't all drive, we don't all go to the doctor and we don't all have children. But we know these things are important for our common life: sharing these things binds us together. Taxation pays for them. And, to be fair, taxation needs to be progressive, taking proportionately more from those most able to pay.

What should we spend, and on what?

How much should we decide together to spend on the common good, and how much should be left for individuals to spend for themselves? The pressure in the UK in recent years from the main three parties has been for the state to tax less and spend less, culminating in the dismantling of public services in the name of austerity.

But we need to put this in a wider context, in both space and time. Different countries spend different amounts of their national income on public goods. The table below compares the Green Party plan, set out in this manifesto, of 45% of GDP spent on public goods with other European countries and the USA, and with the planned decline in investment in the public sphere in the UK. Every percentage drop represents an assault on the ties that bind us together, on support for those who most need it and on investment in a democratic, just and sustainable economy.

Country	% of GDP spent on public goods
United States	41
Spain	42
Germany	45
Belgium	53
France	56
Denmark	58
UK 2010	47
UK 2015 (planned)	39
UK 2020 (planned)	36
Green Party plan	45

And the level of spending on the common good has changed over time, responding to changing circumstances. In 1900, UK government spending was just 14% of GDP. Much of that was defence; there was no welfare state. Spending climbed to 57% in 1918, the last year of the First World War. During the inter-war years spending fell back to around 27%, only to climb to a new peak of 70% at the end of the Second World War. With the creation of the welfare state, spending fell back less after the Second World War, and has moved between 38% and 46% in the past 20 years.

What do the cuts mean? After George Osborne's 2014 Autumn statement, the Director of the independent Institute for Fiscal Studies asked 'How will these cuts be implemented? Is this a fundamental reimagining of the role of the state?'

The answer is yes. The Coalition used to say that it was cutting out of necessity. But this pretence was dropped in 2013 when David Cameron admitted that his commitment to cuts was ideological and permanent: 'We are sticking to the task... this... means building a leaner, more efficient state. We need to do more with less. Not just now, but permanently.' Now we know what this means: more for the rich, less for the poor.

There are three reasons for a fundamental shift to increased taxation and spending:

- To reverse the politically inspired, damaging and unnecessary cuts in public services we have faced in recent years;
- To improve these services in key areas such as early education and social care for older people;
- To meet the challenge of building an entirely new sustainable economy in a world where the private incentives of the market are simply not up to the job.

Almost half our income for the common good? That's what sustainability and equity require.

So the first purpose of taxation is to pay for the things we do in common, and to redistribute income and wealth between us. But there is a second purpose. Taxing something discourages us from buying or doing it. Tax on tobacco reduces smoking. Exempting the tax on something encourages us. The exemption of aviation from fuel taxes was instituted long ago in the early days of flying to encourage aviation. We need to use taxation to encourage sustainability and discourage unsustainability.

Finally, for a tax system to be seen to be fair, everyone must pay their tax. The tax gap – that is, tax that is illegally evaded, legally avoided by exploiting loopholes, or for which collection is abandoned – is estimated to amount to more than £120 billion a year. That's more than the deficit, expected to be £75 billion in 2015. It's more than 30 times the total of benefit fraud, and twice the net cost of a Basic Income scheme. The Green Party is the only party with the political will to make the system fair, to collect unpaid taxes and to challenge powerful tax dodging both in the grey economy and by huge corporations. Recent governments can't be serious about collecting tax fairly and efficiently when HMRC staff have been cut from 93,000 in 2004 to just 52,000 in 2015.

Tax dodging

Caroline Lucas MP secured a debate with the Exchequer Secretary to the Treasury (Mr David Gauke) in order to champion a Fair Tax Mark, much like the Fair Trade Mark, to be awarded to companies that take their tax responsibilities seriously.

Meanwhile, in Europe, Molly Scott Cato MEP worked with other Greens on the European Parliament's Economics Committee to ensure that there will be a full parliamentary inquiry into the scandal of corporate tax avoidance, ensuring that multinational companies will pay the taxes governments need to pay for infrastructure and public services.

Also, as a member of the European Parliament's tax working group, Molly Scott Cato is working to achieve an end to the exemption of aviation fuel from taxation.

Green MPs will lead on bringing a Tax Dodging Bill before the next Parliament.

That's the Green Party's tax policy in a nutshell: tax for fairness and to redistribute income and wealth, and tax for sustainability.

To make taxation fairer we would:

- Introduce a *wealth tax* of 2% a year on the top 1% (see the 'Wealth tax' box) to raise about £25 billion a year by the end of the Parliament. We accept that such a tax would need to be phased in gradually and that the potential yield is uncertain. We would tie the yield on the wealth tax to our proposals to lower employers' National Insurance (see below); to the extent that revenues from the wealth tax grow, employers' National Insurance will be reduced.

- Get serious about *collecting tax*. We would steadily *increase staff in HMRC* by 15,000 per annum over the Parliament, in particular reopening local offices. This would cost successively an additional £1 billion each year and is estimated to bring in cumulatively each year an additional £6 billion, still only one-quarter closing the tax gap, and collecting an extra £30 billion a year by the end of the Parliament.
- Introduce an urgent programme of legislation, starting with a *Tax Dodging Bill* designed to reduce the tax gap and establish a general anti-avoidance principle. Our plans include obliging banks to provide *information* about companies automatically to HMRC, and abolishing the rule that allows *non-domiciled residents* not to pay tax on foreign income.
- Consider making the £2 billion industry of designing, promoting and selling *tax avoidance* schemes illegal.
- Introduce a *Robin Hood tax* of 0.1% on transactions in bonds and equities and 0.01% on derivatives, replacing the existing stamp duty on share transactions. This would raise up to £20 billion a year later in the Parliament and would help stabilise financial markets.
- Reform *Council Tax* by asking people in bigger homes to pay more and those in smaller ones less, and adding two additional bands at the top for the biggest homes worth more than around £2 million and £4.5 million. Under these proposals two-thirds of people would pay less, with the more substantial increases for those in homes worth more than £1 million. Overall this would be revenue neutral.
- Make preparations to replace both Council Tax and the Uniform Business Rate by a system of *Land Value Tax*, where the level of taxation depends on the rental value of the land concerned. The rates would be decided locally with no caps, and subject to a degree of equalisation between richer and poorer areas, and would be kept and spent locally. Transition to Land Value Tax could begin by the last year of the Parliament, and then extend over the following 10 years. Further details are in the 'Land Value Tax' box.
- Abolish the employees' *National Insurance upper threshold*. This would raise £28 billion a year in a full year from those on higher incomes above £42,380, but we would phase this increase in, with the first half of it in 2016–17.
- Raise the *additional (top) rate of income tax to 60%*. This will help bring down the maximum salary ratio in any workplace from the best paid to the lowest paid to no more than 10:1 and also act as a disincentive to paying excessive salaries. It would raise approximately £2 billion a year.
- *Not allow corporation tax relief* on any part of a salary that exceeds the maximum allowed by the 10:1 ratio in that company, to make it harder for companies to pay excessive salaries.
- Increase *corporation tax* from 20% to 30%, yielding around £12 billion a year in a full year. Small firms would remain on 20%.
- Abolish the *capital gains tax personal allowance*, raising around £3.8 billion a year.
- Fundamentally reform *inheritance tax* and turn it into an accessions tax. At present, inheritance tax is one of the easiest taxes to both avoid and evade, and the very rich usually find ways of paying very little. We would make the level of the tax depend on the wealth of the recipient, not the donor, so that all bequests to individual recipients who have less than £200,000 would be tax free. This would encourage people to spread their wealth more widely.
- Counter avoidance by abolishing the *seven-year rule* and making all gifts by living donors subject to a similar accessions tax, with exemptions for small annual amounts as at present. In addition we would tighten up the tax treatment of certain trusts widely used for inheritance tax purposes.

A wealth tax

Most of the emphasis on inequality is about inequality of income. But there is even more inequality in the ownership of accumulated wealth – property, pension rights, stocks and shares, and other assets. The top 10% of households hold nearly half the UK's wealth, the top 1% hold at least 12.5%. Many other countries – France, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Spain and Norway for example – levy annual wealth taxes of up to 2%. The Green Party is part of a movement to build a global wealth tax, the only sure way to counter avoidance and evasion of such taxes. The introduction of automatic information exchange for income tax purposes from 2016 from tax havens will make it easier to trace hidden wealth. We would introduce a tax of 2% a year on the 1% of the population whose wealth exceeds £3 million. There will be an exemption for farmers with agricultural land worth less than £10 million. For those with little income and a rather illiquid asset such as a house, arrangements could be made to defer the tax until the sale of the house. In a full year this tax could raise £25 billion.

To tax for sustainability we would commit the UK economy to a long-run plan to reduce the use of natural resources through the introduction of resource and pollution taxation. In particular we would:

- Begin a major *ecological shift in the taxation of companies* by removing disincentives to employ people. Specifically we would reduce *employers' National Insurance* contributions by the same amount as the yield from the wealth tax above. In the long run this will remove £25 billion a year from a tax on jobs, enabling the tax to be reduced from 13.8% of pay to around 8%.
- Reintroduce the *fuel duty escalator*, raising £2.2 billion in 2015 and an additional £2.2 billion in each successive year through the Parliament.
- Put *aviation* on a level playing field with other modes of transport by making it subject to fuel duty and VAT, raising £16 billion in a full year. If outdated international law makes this impossible, introduce a flight tax dependent on distance and aircraft type that has the same overall economic effect.
- *Reduce VAT on housing renovation and repair work* (including insulation) to 5%, costing £1.6 billion a year. At present there is no VAT on constructing new dwellings but VAT at 20% on converting and renovating old buildings to be used as homes.
- Reduce VAT on the *tourism industry* (meals and drinks out, accommodation and also live performances) to 5%, putting the UK on a level playing field with our international competitors and costing around £6 billion a year.
- Tax *plastic bags* and unnecessary packaging, raising perhaps £1 billion by 2020.
- Levy *eco-taxes* on non-renewables or pollutants, in particular pesticides, organo-chlorines, nitrogen and artificial fertilisers and phosphates, raising £1 billion by 2020.
- Introduce new taxes on the use of *water* by businesses and on *waste heat* from power stations, raising £3 billion by 2020.
- Increase *alcohol and tobacco* duties by a successive £1.4 billion every year in the Parliament.

Land Value Tax

Land Value Tax is a system of local taxation where the landowner pays a proportion of the rental value of the land itself, but not of buildings or improvements upon it, in tax each year. It has many advantages:

- It taxes the value of land and rents, which derive from nature and the efforts of the wider community and not from any effort by the landowner, rather than taxing wages and profits, which derive from labour and capital;
- It is hard to avoid because land cannot be hidden or moved;
- It dampens speculation in land and land hoarding;
- It favours tenants in particular, since the tax cannot be passed on from the landowner, and would substitute for Council Tax, which tenants have to pay; and
- It discourages landowners from not using derelict or vacant land.

The land would be valued at the value that could be obtained if sold for the current planning permitted use. Commons, urban open space, some nature reserves and land used in common such as roads would be exempt. The rate would be set by the local authority. Special arrangements would allow those with land but a low income to pay their Land Value Tax upon the sale of their land or upon their death.

A Land Value Tax set at around 2% of total land values would raise about the same amount as Council Tax and Uniform Business Rate combined. Moreover, 83% of properties would attract lower bills for Land Value Tax than for Council Tax (and many of these would be paid by the freeholder rather than the tenant).

Joining up the policies

So what does taxation have to do with equality and sustainability? It can be used to promote both, rather than promote things we don't want. It's folly to give capital allowances to investment in coal-fired generation, or VAT concessions to new buildings rather than reusing old ones. It's unjust to spend billions on tax relief on pension contributions used overwhelmingly by the rich, or not to use inheritance tax to encourage people to spread their wealth. Taxation is not just a matter of getting in the money for the common good; we can use it to shape behaviour.

It's another virtuous circle.

CHAPTER 10

PUTTING THE SOCIAL BACK INTO SECURITY: A PLAN TO REFORM THE TAX AND BENEFITS SYSTEM

Imagine a tax and benefit system so simple that we could all depend on a small basic income depending on our age, and then, when we did paid work, we simply got taxed at a higher rate the more we earned...

INTRODUCTION – WHAT WE HAVE NOW

In the world of the current government, social security means exactly the opposite of what it says on the tin.

- Living on benefits is to experience constant insecurity, wondering if payments will stretch to cover today's food, next week's school bus, next month's electricity bill.
- It's to experience discrimination, as society is divided into strivers and scroungers, the deserving and the undeserving poor, taxpayers and those on benefits.
- It's to be subject to delayed payments and sanctions, which push you to the food banks.
- It's to lose up to four weeks' payments simply for missing an interview.

Worst of all, the benefits system takes no account of people's real lives. You can pay more in transport costs to attend compulsory sessions at the Job Centre than you receive in benefits. All the while, more and more people fall through the cracks in a social security system that, thanks to ideology and incompetence, offers no security.

Being on benefits creates a poverty trap that discourages employment or increased hours of work. Yet work in today's UK doesn't pay either. It's why, for the first time, there are more people living below the poverty line in working families (6.7 million) than in workless and retired families combined (6.3 million). It's why one of modern UK's growth industries is payday loan sharking. And it's one of the reasons why nothing short of a Green revolution in how we think about social security will do.

The Coalition government has introduced more work-for-benefits schemes, tougher rules on claiming benefits and more sanctions. Job Centre staff are encouraged to do whatever it takes to get people off the dole and deny them the money to which they are entitled. Employment and Support Allowance is a disgrace, with harsh, inaccurate fitness-for-work assessments that are frequently overturned on appeal. Claimants suffer because of huge delays in assessment of Personal Independence Payments.

The Coalition's flagship policy, a so-called simplification of the system, Universal Credit, is a disaster waiting to happen. Implementation dates are constantly revised and the computer systems are never quite ready.

Although Universal Credit claims to improve incentives to work, if you earn an extra £100, £65 will be deducted from your benefit. This is higher than the 45% tax charged on incomes over £150,000, yet we are told that, if we increase that top rate, high earners will lack incentives to work or will leave the country. So should we be surprised if many on benefits decide not to work? In a sensible world, we'd have much lower deductions from earnings for those who earn least.

Instead of entrenching the difference between being in and out of work, which is what mainstream welfare tries to do, the Green Party will work to eliminate it altogether.

Green MP Caroline Lucas and welfare reform

In the last Parliament, Green MP Caroline Lucas took a stand against the removal of the link between benefit levels and inflation, the government's welfare reforms, the widespread scapegoating of the poor and disabled, and the myth that welfare and other public spending was the cause of the economic recession. Here are some of her comments:

'As well as being callous and cruel, the bedroom tax is counter-productive.'

'If our priority is fairness, we should be seeking savings from those who can afford it, not penalising the poorest and pushing them into ever more precarious misery.'

'The government's misguided austerity programme is leading to social devastation and is economically illiterate.'

A RADICAL LONG-TERM PLAN TO REFORM THE TAX AND BENEFITS SYSTEM

The Green Party thinks the time has come to reconsider the whole tax and benefits system and to rebuild it from the ground up – a system not built on punishing and isolating people, making them jump through hoops to get hand-outs from the state, but one that goes back to the founding principles of the welfare state, in the belief that, as members of society, we have a shared responsibility for one another's well-being in times of need and a shared commitment to helping others play the most active role they can in our society.

The idea in a nutshell is this. *Scrap* most of the *existing benefits* apart from disability benefits and Housing Benefit. *Abolish* the income tax *personal allowance*. Then pay every woman, man and child legally *resident* in the UK a *guaranteed, non-means-tested income, sufficient to cover basic needs – a Basic Income*. For those who earn, the Basic Income compensates for the loss of the personal allowance.

Children will receive a reduced Basic Income, Child Benefit. Pensioners will receive their Basic Income at a higher level, as a Citizen's Pension.

The advantages are many and we support the principle of a Universal Basic Income because it has the potential to:

- Act as a springboard rather than a safety net; people can take jobs without fear of prosecution for working while on benefits;
- Prevent people falling into absolute poverty rather than trying to help them when they are already there;
- Reward people for all the work that's done outside the formal economy, and most of this work is done by women;
- Encourage more of this unpaid activity, much of which – such as food growing, fixing things that have gone wrong, converting older buildings, protecting the natural environment – is a vital part of a transition to a more sustainable economy;
- Avoid the poverty trap in which an increase in wages leads to a massive loss of benefits;
- Make everyone who earns, however little, a citizen who contributes to society by paying taxes, giving almost everyone a stake – raising the personal allowance takes us in precisely the wrong direction;
- Be simple to administer and easy to understand.

Basic Income would be a massive change to the entire UK tax and benefits system. We recognise that it would *not be practicable or right to carry out that change within a single Parliament*. We are publishing alongside but separate from this manifesto a *detailed set of proposals for a comprehensive Basic Income scheme*. It contains full details of the scheme itself, costings and proposals on how to pay for it, and an initial analysis of how the scheme would affect the net income of different groups.

We would use the forthcoming Parliament to

- *Consult* upon this scheme,
- Have government departments carry out and commission *research* (including research into behavioural changes and how Basic Income would affect those on the lowest incomes and child poverty), and
- Draft appropriate *legislation*, with a view to implementing the full scheme in the following Parliament.

There are further things we would propose to do in the forthcoming Parliament as steps towards this major reform:

- Reform the existing working-age benefits regime.
- Pay an enhanced *Child Benefit*.
- Introduce a universal *Citizen's Pension*.

WORKING-AGE BENEFITS

A major problem with existing working-age benefits and tax credits is the poverty trap. We would be prepared to *invest up to £30 billion over the Parliament to reduce the amounts that people lose from their benefits* when they move into paid work and to fund the other changes to the benefits regime set out in this section.

In complex ways, eligibility for some benefits (e.g. Jobseeker's Allowance) is lost altogether once a person is employed for a certain period, or reduced pound for pound if certain small disregarded amounts are exceeded. Some other benefits (e.g. Housing Benefit) are reduced in a different way, by withdrawal rates that allow those earning to keep a small part of what they earn and not lose all of it. We would make small changes in the direction of allowing those who earn some income from paid work to keep more of that income, starting with increasing the disregards for Income Support and Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). Initially we would increase the income disregarded on JSA for all categories of client to £50 a week, with similar increases for those on Universal Credit.

It is not possible to be precise about how much the increased costs of such moves would be offset by more people on benefits taking up employment or working for longer hours. Depending on results, we are prepared to invest up to £30 billion on such employment-stimulating measures over the Parliament. We would also explore the introduction of a more generous treatment of earnings within Universal Credit for all claimants, whatever their housing circumstances.

We would also:

- *Halt implementation of the Universal Credit* programme and carry out a thorough review of its structure and implementation, including the treatment of earned income, and removing conditionality.
- *End work-for-benefits programmes, or workfare*, and ensure a fair choice of waged work opportunities or voluntary training for jobseekers.
- Ensure that all those on *training or work placements* as part of the benefits regime are either in college-based training or at work earning at least the minimum wage.
- Review the harsh systems of *sanctions and benefits caps* introduced by the Coalition government and its predecessors.
- Consider offering more personalised job-seeking support for people with *mental health* problems.
- Restore *Council Tax Benefit* at the equivalent of 2012–13 levels for low-income householders, costing around £500 million a year.
- Cancel the Department for Work and Pensions contracts with the *private sector* for benefit entitlement assessment.
- Restore the link between *state benefits and earnings*; ensure state benefits rise as fast as prices or wages, whichever of those grows more.
- *Abolish childcare tax credits and tax reliefs* in the light of our proposals for free universal early education and childcare.
- Pay *students* maintenance grants until Basic Income is introduced.
- Raise the *minimum wage* and outlaw exploitative *zero-hours contracts*, so that the jobs taken by unemployed people are above a minimum standard.

CHILD BENEFIT

Bringing up a child is expensive. It is also vital work on behalf of society as a whole; those of us without children will depend on the children of others when we grow older. It is right that society as a whole makes a contribution, as is recognised by our free state education system. But that system needs two extensions: a free universal early education and childcare service (see Chapter 7 on Education), and a more realistic level of Child Benefit.

We will:

- Raise Child Benefit as from 2016 from £20.70 a week for the oldest or only child and £13.70 a week for additional children in 2015–16 to *£40 a week for each child*.
- *Pay for the £15.5 billion net cost of this by using this much of the £28 billion raised from those on higher incomes by abolishing the National Insurance upper threshold.*

CITIZEN'S PENSION

The bedrock of our pension policy is the Citizen's Pension, which, unlike the new flat-rate pension, would be paid to all pensioners regardless of contribution record, and to existing as well as new pensioners, so no pensioner will live in poverty. We would introduce this in 2016. It will pay £180 a week to a single pensioner or £310 for a couple, taking all pensioners above the poverty line. Increases will be at the higher of the increases in the prices of basic goods and services or in average earnings.

The existing State Pension and Pension Credits cost £90 billion a year, while the new pensions above will cost £116 billion. The net cost is therefore £26 billion. We will fund this by reducing tax and National Insurance incentives for private pensions by one-half, raising £20 billion (see the 'Older people and pensions' section in Chapter 5) and using a further £6 billion available from abolishing the National Insurance upper threshold (see the 'Child Benefit' section above).

Joining up the policies

So what do housing, pensions and investing in a new sustainable economy have to do with each other? Pensions need sound, long-run infrastructure to invest in, such as energy generation and social housing. And, if the pensions system is broken, people will invest in houses instead, pushing up prices and rents. So, if we create a new pensions system investing in the things we need, and discourage the things such as mortgage interest relief for landlords that encourage investment in housing, then we reduce the money chasing existing housing, and prices and rents fall.

It's another virtuous circle.

CHAPTER 11

GOVERNMENT AND PEOPLE, PUBLIC AND PRIVATE, LOCAL AND NATIONAL

Imagine being part of another kind of coalition. Not the grubby one that's handed democracy over to the private sector, but one made up of elected politicians determined to govern for the common good, a revitalised local government, a regulated private sector, the third sector and non-profits – and you and me. Imagine a voting system in which your vote actually counts. Imagine more decisions being taken where they really matter – locally. Imagine going to your reopened public library, strolling round your well-tended local park, taking your child to a school brought back under local authority control, and visiting an elderly relative in a local authority care home staffed by trained and well-paid carers. Imagine the end of cronyism, corruption and the 'Westminster bubble'. Imagine Parliament belonging to the people...

WHO GOVERNS?

We elect politicians to govern in our name, not to hand power over to huge corporations acting in shareholder interest.

Successive governments, and particularly the current one, have outsourced government to the unaccountable private sector. This hollowing out of government is based on dogma – that the private sector does things better than the public sector. Successive scandals and failures of provision have proved this dogma wrong. But still the contracts get handed out, with the private sector taking all the profit and the taxpayer – you and me – shouldering all the risk. Government has been put out to tender. Corporate interests, heading a coalition of the rich and powerful, have ruled the roost for too long.

This has brought politics and politicians into disrepute. When things go wrong, the government blames the companies to which it has outsourced its work, and politicians are accused of being on the make. Some are, as we found out during the expenses scandal. But many aren't, and the Green Party will lead a revolution in standards, putting politics back in the hands of the people and governing for the common good.

It is well placed to do this. The Green Party has made electoral gains at local, national and European level. Our councillors, our MP and our MEPs work effectively for the people who voted for them.

The biggest lesson of the Scottish referendum was that, when people are given the responsibility for making big decisions, they grab it with both hands. The Green Party will turn the tide on apathy and disillusionment by making these opportunities the rule rather than the exception.

A Green government would:

- *Regulate the private sector* in the common interest, including *curbing excessive pay* for executives and senior managers.
- Introduce a *Public Service Users Bill* to bring back into *public ownership* sectors of the economy on which we all depend.
- Recognise that, if government is small, society doesn't automatically become big – the *third sector* needs strong, enabling government.
- Treat *citizens* as grown-ups, capable of recognising the common good and acting on it.

- Not accept the dogma that government cannot lead or innovate and has no entrepreneurial drive. We will set *creative government* free.
- Recognise that *efficiency in public services* does matter, provided it is not at the cost of poor service or exploitation of staff. We would expect to find very modest savings of 0.3% over 50% of the government's operations each successive year. In contrast, the Coalition has too often described actual cuts in public services as efficiency savings.

Green MP Caroline Lucas and the Public Service Users Bill

In January 2014, inspired by We Own It, Green MP Caroline Lucas presented in Parliament a plan to defend our public services. Her Public Service Users Bill would:

- Make public ownership the default option before any service is sold off.
- Ensure people are asked – and genuinely listened to – before any service is put out to tender.
- Give the public a right to recall private companies if they're running our services poorly.
- Make private companies running public services more transparent.

A NEW CONSTITUTIONAL SETTLEMENT

UK politics is rooted in the past and has lost touch with the present. Our Parliament looks back to feudal times rather than forward to democratic times; we cling to 18 as the age of political maturity despite young people's growing sophistication and capacity to make decisions for themselves; we legitimise corruption through unfair funding of political parties; our MPs pay more attention to their parties than to the people when it comes to voting – constituents need to be re-empowered.

To put this right the Green Party will:

- Move towards a *written constitution* with a Bill of Rights.
- Bring in *proportional representation* (PR) using the Additional Member System for parliamentary elections and continue fixed-term Parliaments. Only the 200,000 votes in marginal seats really counted in the last election – that's less than 0.5% of those eligible to vote. We would make everyone's vote count.
- Introduce the right to vote at 16.
- *Reform the House of Lords* to become a fully elected body chosen by PR; but, to promote its independence, members should be elected for only one fixed term of ten years, with half the House being elected every five years.
- Bring in a fair system of *state funding for political parties* so there's no longer a need for reliance on private and trade union donations, which can have a corrupting effect.
- Ensure that all lobbying, and in particular *corporate lobbying*, is registered and fully disclosed, including lobbying of elected politicians and of civil servants.
- Immediately repeal the unsatisfactory *Lobbying Act*, so that civil society organisations can campaign properly.
- Retain the principle that human rights are the common property of the whole world by keeping the *Human Rights Act* and retaining the UK's membership of the European Convention on Human Rights and the Council of Europe.
- Aspire to a *50:50 Parliament* by 2025 with equal numbers of women and men.
- Introduce *referendums on local government decisions* if called for by 20% of the local electorate.
- Introduce *recall referendums on MPs* and other representatives if 20% of electors request it.
- Make equality before the law a fundamental constitutional right. But this is only a reality if all can afford to use the law. We would restore the cuts to *Legal Aid*, costing around £700 million a year.

LOCALISATION

The Scotland independence referendum put decentralisation back on the political agenda – a cause that Greens have championed for years. We have long argued that nothing should be decided at a central level that can be decided at a local level. We need to improve the way the UK is governed, passing power back to the people, back to where they live and work. Local councils have been starved of the funds they need to do their job. That is why requests for social care go unheeded, libraries are shut and public parks neglected.

And it isn't just money. Local democracy is withering and dying because councillors are hemmed about by regulation and their functions have been systematically removed over the past 30 years. Local Government Secretary Eric Pickles has virtually abolished onshore wind energy by overriding local planning and halting turbine projects. We will fund local government properly and extend its functions, reviving local democracy.

We will:

Money

- Provide a *£10 billion a year uplift in local authority budgets* to allow local authorities to restore essential local services, creating more than 200,000 local jobs.
- Add further *higher bands to Council Tax* to allow authorities to raise more on the largest homes.
- *Not cap* what local authorities are allowed to raise in Council Tax, allow local councils to conduct revaluations and to set their own multiplier rates, provided they are more progressive, and not require a Council Tax referendum when they do so.
- Ensure that *grant funding is sufficient to pay for all statutory services* that councils are required to provide. To fund discretionary activities, we would allow local authorities to set *local business rates*, and then distribute the whole of Council Tax receipts and Business Rate receipts between local authorities on a basis decided by a Commission independent of central government set up by local authorities themselves.
- Also allow local authorities to levy *new local taxes*, such as local tourist taxes, empty homes levies, supermarket taxes or workplace parking levies, and to set rates for and keep part or all of some taxes collected locally, such as income tax and VAT, and distribute them as above.
- Allow local authorities freedom to set local *finances, fees and charges*.
- Put these taxation arrangements beyond future Whitehall revision by giving *formal constitutional protection* to local democracy and tax-raising powers.
- Scrap the *New Homes Bonus* and add the money to the Revenue Support Grant.
- Not start any new *private finance initiative* projects and set local authorities free to *borrow* to fund local capital investment in social housing, electricity generation and distribution, and local public transport.
- Set up a fund of up to £5 billion over the Parliament to *buy out* existing PFI projects where it is a good deal to do so.

Democracy

- Restore local authority control over *education*, with full delegation of the appropriate budgets.
- Allow local authorities to run *local public transport* and *other local services* such as domestic and commercial waste disposal, community energy schemes and local food production entirely as they wish, including using publicly owned and run services and employing social enterprise and voluntary sector organisations.
- *Keep trade local* by allowing local authorities to favour local procurement to help their local economy.
- Give local authorities powers to encourage *local live performance* in the arts by moving funding from the regional to the local level and modifying regulations so that small-scale live performance in pubs and similar venues is not stifled.
- Create an *Assembly for Cornwall*, with similar powers to the Welsh Assembly.
- Work for the abolition of the *City of London Corporation* and the special statuses it enjoys. Residents will decide on the future governance arrangements for the local functions exercised by the Corporation, with the same division of roles between the local and the strategic as in any other part of London.

Planning

- Require local authorities to set out a *local carbon plan* showing how their area will meet overall greenhouse gas reduction targets.
- Put *planning back* in the hands of local government by:
 - repealing the *National Planning Policy Framework* and in particular its presumption in favour of economic development;
 - restricting the ability of the Secretary of State to *call in* planning applications;
 - restricting the right of applicants to *appeal* only where there has been an error in the planning process;
 - strengthening local authorities' powers to prevent changes of use for important *community facilities* such as local shops, pubs and meeting halls;
 - giving local authorities *planning powers* to support local shops and businesses through planning policies including business conservation areas, ensuring basic shops are available within walking distance in all urban areas, restricting the number of payday lenders and restricting the power of supermarkets; and
 - introducing a *community right of appeal* where a development is non-compliant with a neighbourhood plan or local plan.
- Support preservation of the *historic environment*, in part by being flexible about how older buildings reduce their energy use.

Constitutional Convention

The Green Party supports calls for a Constitutional Convention led by citizens – a People's Convention. We'd use that opportunity to make the case for the changes detailed above. Parts of England, based on groups of local authorities, could come together to exercise greater powers; these might amount to existing regions, or possibly city regions. The process must be driven by the bottom up decisions of local authorities, not by top down direction. The Convention would also consider further devolution to Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. As set out above, we favour much greater devolution to and tax-raising powers for local authorities, with this settlement put beyond future Whitehall revision by giving formal constitutional protection to local democracy. Any constitutional changes should be subject to referendums.

WALES

Greens have long supported the process of devolution in Wales. We believe that the people of Wales should enjoy the degree of autonomy, perhaps including full self-government or independence, that they wish to have, as expressed in a referendum.

Up until any such referendum, Greens in Wales will focus on improving and maximising the potential of the current devolution settlement.

Reflecting the devolved status of Wales within the UK, the Wales Green Party has an autonomous status within the wider party and publishes independent policy statements and its own manifesto covering all areas of devolved power. These include matters such as health, education, transport and housing.

Greens in Wales would:

- Increase *real power* at all levels, from local councils up to the Welsh Assembly.
- Increase the *number* of Assembly members.
- Push for the National Assembly to become a *Parliament* with powers equal to those in Scotland.

One benefit of these increased powers would be the ability for Wales to fully realise its potential as a producer of clean renewable energy.

Greens recognise that cultural diversity is as vital as ecological biodiversity in maintaining and enriching a healthy and fair society. We would promote and protect this cultural diversity at a grassroots level with the promotion of community radio, television, live arts, etc. in both the Welsh and English languages. Wales Green Party policies would help create the strong local sustainable economies and thriving communities necessary for the future of the Welsh language and the nation's rich cultural diversity.

INFORMATION AND DIGITAL RIGHTS

We live in the information age and we know that information is power. But how should information be controlled? What information should be available, and to whom?

The Green Party supports a world of open, freely flowing information. We don't want disproportionate or unaccountable surveillance or censorship. We want a transparent state, but we want control over the data that our digital lives create. We need copyright laws that reward creators but that are consistent with digital technologies. Above all we want democratic political control of this technology. We would consider combining elements of the policies below into a comprehensive Digital Bill of Rights.

We would:

- Oppose any case for secret unaccountable *mass surveillance* of the type exposed by Edward Snowden. We do accept that government law enforcement agencies may occasionally need to intercept communications in specific circumstances. Such specific surveillance should be proportionate, necessary, effective and within the rule of law, with independent judicial approval and genuine parliamentary oversight.
- Replace the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, which has failed
 - to regulate the deployment of undercover police;
 - to support the confidentiality of journalistic sources;
 - to support legal confidentiality; and
 - to enshrine an open and effective right of redress.
- Support and protect *Internet freedom*.
- Follow *human rights judgments* limiting surveillance and data retention in full.
- Support the EU's proposals to strengthen data protection laws against opposition from large US data-driven companies.
- Limit the censoring or takedown of content or activity to exceptional circumstances, clearly set out within a comprehensive *legal framework*.
- Make *copyright* shorter in length, fair and flexible, and prevent patents applying to software.
- Introduce a more satisfactory law on so-called malicious comments made on *social media* than the blanket and crude section 127 of the Communications Act 2003.
- Oppose the *privatisation of data* held by the government that should be open to all, such as the Postcode Address File, or by companies providing public services, such as data on the progress of buses that can be used by Smartphone apps to predict waiting times.
- Oppose the *sale of personal data*, such as health or tax records, for commercial or other ends.
- Use government purchasing power to support open standards in information technology.

MEDIA, SPORTS AND THE ARTS

How politics is reported is vital for our democracy – active citizenship has to be informed citizenship. Public support for the arts is part of a civilised society. We would:

- Tighten the rules on *cross-media ownership* and ensure that no individual or company owns more than 20% of a media market.
- *Support the recommendations of the Leveson Inquiry* into press ethics and for the cross-party Royal Charter. But if this is not supported by all the major newspapers we will support legislation to implement the Leveson system of independent press self-regulation.
- Maintain the *BBC* as the primary public service broadcaster, free of government interference, with funding guaranteed in real terms in statute to prevent government interference.
- Increase government arts funding by £500 million a year to restore the cuts made since 2010 and reinstate proper levels of funding for local authorities, helping to keep local museums, theatres, libraries and art galleries open.
- Reduce VAT to 5% for *live performances*.
- Work to support *fair pay* productions in the arts.
- Support initiatives to make the *arts and sports accessible to all*.
- Set targets for *participation* in sports by *women, ethnic minorities* and *disabled* people in particular.

- Make sure all children get at least a *half-day equivalent of sports in school* and encourage both the use of schools sports facilities by the community and participation in regional and national sporting events by our young people.
- Ensure that all have *digital access* and give BT and other public telecommunications operators an obligation to provide affordable high-speed broadband-capable infrastructure to every household and small business. This in particular will encourage video-conferencing, helping to reduce both business and family travel.
- Strengthen controls on *advertising* directed at children.
- Value the contribution made by *civil society organisations* both here and abroad. In particular, we would repeal the *Lobbying Act 2014* (see the 'Green MP opposes the Lobbying Bill' box below).
- Support *state funding* of political parties.
- Give fair representation to political parties in *televised debates*.

Caroline Lucas opposes the Lobbying Bill

At every stage of the Lobbying Bill's progress through Parliament, Green MP Caroline Lucas was at the forefront of attempts to stop the Bill becoming law. She was one of a group of MPs who tabled an amendment to reject the Bill outright and was a vocal critic of moves to drastically curtail the debate we need for a healthy democracy.

Caroline campaigned for legislation that would shine a real light on lobbying activity and criticised the Coalition's proposals for letting most corporate lobbyists off the hook, at the same time as effectively gagging the activities of civil society groups speaking out on anything from housing policy to wildlife conservation.

She tabled an amendment to the Bill that would have opened up to proper scrutiny how much is spent on lobbying – as well as who is doing it. She called for details to be made public about when staff transfer between the civil service and the private sector. And she has stood up in Parliament time and again to reiterate the Green Party's commitment to repealing what's dubbed the Gagging Bill.

CHAPTER 12

GETTING AROUND: TRANSPORT

Imagine being able to leave your car in the garage – or not needing one at all... because reliable, affordable public transport, coupled with safe, clean, welcoming streets for walking and cycling, meets your transport needs. Could that not be the real world?

Like so much else, the UK has got transport upside down. The big picture is a world of finite resources, especially the type that runs much of our transport – petroleum. This is running out, and we know we need to leave much of what is left in the ground. We have to create a transport system based on sustainable alternatives.

We also have an increasingly car-dependent population because the cost of public transport has risen faster than wages and faster than the total cost of driving, and in many areas public transport is so scarce that people have little alternative but to get around by car. This has led to a public health crisis caused by rising levels of physical inactivity and health-damaging air pollution. We also face an increasing toll of death and injury on the roads, particularly among pedestrians and cyclists who face unacceptable danger in our vehicle-dominated and congested towns, cities and villages.

Our privatised railways are fragmented and uncoordinated, ticket prices are high and unpredictable, and timetables do not connect seamlessly with buses at stations. This means rail fails to play its full part in delivering an effective alternative to the private car.

Long-distance travel by air is one of the most energy-intensive and polluting forms of transport and causes health-damaging local pollution near airports. Aviation fuel goes untaxed and there is no VAT on tickets, amounting to a £16 billion a year subsidy in the UK. We need a shift in priority, removing subsidies from air travel to invest in public transport that supports the common good.

In the long run we have to create a transport system that is socially just and addresses health inequality by prioritising affordable access to services by walking, cycling and public transport, by reducing road danger, by cleaning up our air and by minimising congestion. This transport system should use electricity, not oil, and make our towns, cities and villages into more liveable, socially inclusive places.

Against this backdrop, mainstream transport policy, which urges us to travel further and faster than ever before, is senseless, yet this is what all parties except the Green Party offer you.

The key to getting this right is to manage demand rather than increase it; that is, to reduce the need to travel in the first place. We need to:

- Reduce the distances travelled, reduce the number of journeys made by car and switch as many journeys as possible to walking, cycling and public transport;
- Encourage alternatives to travel, such as video-conferencing;
- Integrate different transport options and provide seamless door-to-door journeys;
- Prioritise everyday access for everybody wherever they live to local facilities such as the shops, the doctors' surgery, schools and workplaces; and
- Enable more people to get to where they need to go while using a car less.

Green Party transport policy prioritises in this order, building from the bottom up:

- walking and disabled access to all other forms of transport;
- cycling;
- public transport (trains, light rail/trams, buses and ferries) and rail- and water-borne freight;
- light goods vehicles, taxis and low-powered motor cycles;
- private motorised transport (cars and high-powered motor cycles);
- heavy goods vehicles; and
- aircraft.

Green councillors mean safer streets...

Green councillors were instrumental in bringing in 20 mph limits on many residential roads in Norwich, Islington and Leicester, as well as a default 20 mph limit on all residential roads in Lancashire and in Brighton & Hove.

BRINGING THE RAILWAYS INTO PUBLIC HANDS

For trains to play their part in the total journey experience, they need to connect seamlessly with buses and convenient walking and cycling routes to local centres of habitation.

The Green Party is committed to bringing rail services into public ownership and control. The current fragmented structure does not put the passenger and the total journey experience at the centre of planning and has created a costly, wasteful, uncoordinated outcome. Recent experience in running the East Coast Main Line within the public sector has shown that both quality and receipts to the Treasury go up when a rail service is run in this way, whereas experience on the West Coast Main Line in the private sector shows that the franchise system is costly, wasteful and not fit for purpose. The Green Party will consult widely on the organisational details of a rail operation in public ownership and how it will link to democratic accountability at the regional and city-region geographical scales.

Diesel exhaust emissions are a known human carcinogen and diesel trains do not perform as well as electrified rail operations in terms of passenger comfort, acceleration and deceleration, and the ability to make more stops at intermediate stations with minimal impact on overall journey time. The Green Party wants to see electrification of the railway system to achieve levels to be found in Germany (59% of track electrified) or Sweden (73% electrified). The UK has 34% of its track electrified. High levels of electrification reduce health-damaging air pollution, reduce greenhouse gases and deliver a much-improved passenger experience. Electrification will also require new rolling stock and the Green Party will promote the design and manufacturing of this new stock in the UK, contributing to job creation in those regions with higher than average unemployment.

Putting this plan into action for the common good means bringing the railways back into public ownership – making them belong to you and me, run by rail workers for passengers. On 26 June 2013, Green MP Caroline Lucas published a Private Members' Bill to do just this, a policy supported by 66% of the British public. The privatised railways cost over £1 billion a year in:

- Interest payments;
- Debt write-offs;
- The costs of railway fragmentation;
- The profit margins of tiers of contractors and sub-contractors;
- Payments to shareholders; and
- Bonuses paid to railway bosses (up to 166% of annual salaries).

Between 1997 and 2013, rail fares leapt by 22%, while road users have experienced a 9% drop – exactly the wrong priority. Rail isn't really 'private' anyway – 60% of the network is owned by state-backed foreign companies. And this 'private' system takes £4 billion in public subsidies every year. Labour's response is to require the state to bid for franchises it already owns – at millions of pounds a time. As Caroline says, a privatised railway 'is a blatant transfer of public money to private interests at the expense of the taxpayer and rail passengers'. Bringing the railways back into public ownership would cost very little if it was done as existing franchises fell due for renewal. This will:

- Save money;
- Mean a better deal for passengers;
- Allow local authorities to plan and run local services;
- Increase the scope for the democratic involvement of local communities in planning and running railways; and
- Reduce congestion and improve safety.

In addition on the railways, we would *not support HS2* (the proposed high-speed network). The money to be spent on this hugely expensive project, which at best will reduce journey times for a few passengers, would be much better spent on improving the conventional rail connections between various major cities, improving the resilience of the existing network to climate change and reopening lines and stations that have been closed.

DECARBONISING TRANSPORT

The major challenge for our transport system is to decarbonise it and end its reliance on fossil fuels. We would:

- End the wasteful and destructive *national major roads programme*, saving £15 billion over the Parliament.
- Spend part of this £15 billion on improving and subsidising public transport, with an average *fare reduction* of 10% costing £8 billion over the Parliament, fixing potholes in existing roads and investing in walking and cycling.
- Support *walking and cycling*. In particular, we would ensure that pedestrians and cyclists get their fare share of road space and would spend at least *£30 per head* on them over every year of the Parliament. Funding should be allocated flexibly to make safe, convenient routes that address the needs of pedestrians and cyclists while reducing any risk of conflict between them.
- Support the *re-regulation of bus services to provide a better, more reliable service*.
- End the favourable *tax treatment of aviation* and have a separate target for *aviation emissions* of below 37.5 million tonnes CO₂ equivalent a year.
- *Stop airport expansion*, in particular *no new runways* at either Heathrow or Gatwick, and ban night flying.
- *Invest in electric vehicle charging points* for buses and taxis, and for cars where there are gaps in the network of public and community transport.
- Incentivise *consolidation of white van deliveries* so that last-mile deliveries can be made by cargo bikes and electric vehicles in local areas.

AFFORDABLE PUBLIC TRANSPORT

Instead of prestige projects such as HS2 and new runways, we need to prioritise local transport and make sure it is accessible to everybody. The Green Party would:

- Prioritise affordable *local public transport*, accessible to all, including those with disabilities.
- Support *free local transport for pensioners*, including the existing local bus pass scheme and the Freedom Pass in London.
- Extend *free local public transport to young people* and students, costing around £4 billion a year.
- Develop regional smart payment systems with integrated ticketing, like the London Oyster system.
- Extend networks of public transport to include rural areas.

A STEP CHANGE IN ROAD SAFETY

The numbers of people killed or seriously injured on the UK's roads have fallen in recent years. But they are still appallingly high: 1,713 people died on the roads in 2013, and 21,657 were seriously injured, far worse than for other modes of transport. We will:

- Work for a road transport system that results in zero *deaths or serious injuries* by systematically reducing sources of danger on the roads.
- Reduce both collisions and fuel use by bringing down *speed limits*, in particular to 20 mph in residential areas, including main roads where people live, work and shop; enforce speed limits with speed cameras and policing.
- Change the culture of road justice and *civil compensation* with a road danger reduction approach. A greater duty of care should be expected of drivers in reducing injury and intimidation of vulnerable road users. Motor vehicle *drivers should be presumed liable for injuries to pedestrians and cyclists*. If the casualty has contributed to the collision, compensation may be reduced, but not when the victim is a child, elderly (70+) or impaired.
- Reduce the *alcohol limit* for drivers to as close to zero as is practicable.
- Require newly manufactured lorries to be equipped with best practice technology to make sure that drivers are fully aware of the presence of all pedestrians and cyclists. *Pedestrian and cyclist fatalities* and serious injuries when involved in *collisions with lorries* are predictable, preventable and unacceptable. The technology already exists and is in use in several countries and consists of a mixture of in-cab screens linked to cameras, multiple wing mirrors and physical modification to prevent people being dragged under the vehicle. Lorries already in use must be retro-fitted with the same equipment and lorries not so equipped will not be allowed into our towns and cities.
- *Reduce lorry activity* and road freight volume by improving rail freight services, reducing the number of empty or partially loaded trips, and using cargo bikes for last-mile deliveries to replace some white van trips.

TOWNS AND CITIES FOR PEOPLE

We need to rescue our towns and cities from traffic and turn them back into places where we want to be. The Green Party will support an *Active Travel Bill* for England in order to achieve this.

- Make *streets healthy and safe* places for people to cycle and walk and for *children to play*, while building physical activity into their daily journeys.
- Help schools and workplaces to support *active travel to and from work*, and encourage local authorities to assist this by linking their public health and transport functions.
- Ensure that all *planning decisions* have to take into account the *active travel* and public transport implications.
- Make public transport more convenient by integrating ticketing with *smart regional ticketing systems such as the London Oyster card*.
- Introduce *road-pricing* schemes such as the London congestion charge and road-user tolls for heavy lorries.
- Begin consultation with a view to developing a framework for the *progressive elimination of diesel exhaust emissions*. A major cause of air pollution is emissions from diesel vehicles (cars, buses and trains). We recognise the latest scientific evidence of the harmful effect of diesel on human health.
- Introduce *Ultra Low Emission Zones* to ensure air pollution reduces to comply with EU limits.
- *Reduce the need for car parking* spaces by reducing car dependency and transferring trips, where appropriate, to walking, cycling and public transport. Car parking is expensive to provide, can obstruct pedestrians and people with disabilities if it takes place on pavements, and takes up valuable road space that could be reallocated to pedestrians and cyclists.
- Reduce *parking spaces in new developments* and increase rates of walking, cycling and public transport by strengthening planning law to make best practice travel plans mandatory for workplaces, homes and other destinations.
- *Eliminate pavement parking* and, in close cooperation with waste collection and emergency services, make sure that these essential services have unimpeded access to all addresses.
- Ensure that parking policies in *residential areas* deliver a high-quality street environment and reduce the numbers of those who are clogging up residential streets as part of a commuter trip or other activities not related to a visit to an address in that street. *Parking charges* of all kinds in public car parks and streets will be proportionate to the full cost of providing that facility.
- Provide *cycle parking* throughout towns and cities at locations where there is demand and invest in on-street secure cycle storage in residential streets.

A RURAL TRANSPORT REVOLUTION

Approximately 20% of the UK population live in rural areas and many of these are retired and may have to adjust to a lifestyle without a car for health and income reasons. It is essential that rural areas get the best possible deal for widening transport choices.

The Green Party does not accept that there is a fundamental and intractable rural transport problem. Rural transport in many parts of Germany, Austria and Switzerland is of a very high quality and the quality is based on careful planning, coordination and investment and recognition that, although a car will be needed for a proportion of journeys, it is not the default option. The small village of Gempen in Switzerland, with a population of about 800, has ten buses each day that connect with tram and train services at the next-larger settlement (Dornach). We will:

- Make sure that *rural areas are not neglected* when transport budgets and planning for our cities and city regions are under discussion.
- Develop *networks of community and public transport* to provide regular links to onward transport networks.
- Introduce *speed limits of 20 mph in villages and 40 mph on rural roads*.

Green councillors bring safer cycling...

Lancaster Greens helped to deliver the Cycling Demonstration Town project with more than £4 million external funding for safer routes and cycling promotion.

Greens in power carry out our transport policies

In Green-led Brighton, the Council has:

- Introduced the largest connected 20 mph zone in the country, and casualties fell by 19%;
- Built a new cycle hub at the station;
- Introduced cycle priority at junctions, proper cycle lanes and cycle contraflow lanes;
- Introduced the first 'floating' bus stop, resulting in:
 - bus usage increasing by almost 9% over two years,
 - falling nitrous oxide and carbon dioxide emissions,
 - an 11% increase in daily cycle journeys between 2009 and 2012, and
 - falling road casualties, with 200 fewer killed and injured in 2013 than in 2011.

CHAPTER 13

THE LOCAL AND GLOBAL: INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

Imagine the UK as a good global neighbour, committed to peacemaking and to helping create the conditions for a flourishing life for everyone on the planet. This is a UK bent on resolving conflicts rather than making them worse, determined to listen as well as to speak. How about the chance to vote for a Europe of self-reliance rather than free trade and indiscriminate growth? Imagine a climate change agreement that is both just and effective. Picture a world where the big decisions are made by democratically elected governments and not by private corporations – picture the end of talk of the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)...

We live in an interconnected world, which brings huge benefits as well as drawbacks. Decisions that we make affect people in other countries, and events in other countries affect us. In particular, UK foreign and military policies over many years have contributed to challenges to our security today:

- By using up global resources or polluting the air or water that we all share;
- By influencing how much we pay for diminishing natural resources and how much we get paid for our labour;
- By driving displacement;
- By creating insecurity at home and abroad.

Greens are internationalists and want to live in a world that is just and fair, secure and peaceful, and where human rights are universally respected. We will make the UK a force for international good, respected throughout the global community, with coherent foreign policies based on building effective and cooperative security relations across the world.

All countries deserve a voice in global decision-making, and we want to use ours to support the following:

- A new, holistic and consistent approach to peace and defence, which is focused on genuine peacekeeping and respect for the sovereignty of peoples around the world.
- A fundamental restructuring of our global economy, with power held at the local and regional level and only passed upwards when international cooperation is necessary. We call this 'subsidiarity' – this principle is the basis of our approach to the European Union and other international organisations.
- Writing off and writing down unpayable international debt, avoiding paternalistic aid, and securing the rights of First Nations peoples. Trade that supports the well-being of workers that can be achieved without breaching sustainability limits is useful, but a blind commitment to 'free' trade is not.
- A global policy of Contraction and Convergence in which rich countries' use of finite energy resources contracts, while that of poorer countries expands, to converge on an equitable and sustainable per capita sharing of global energy, designed to keep within 2 degrees C of warming. Only in this way can poor countries improve living standards while the world as a whole avoids hitting resource and climate limits.
- Making UK foreign policy genuinely independent, based on the principles of shared responsibility, cooperative security and human rights.

We will:

- Work to reform the United Nations and associated bodies, to reflect better the needs and interests of all countries, and make the UN more representative and effective through abolishing permanent seats on the UN Security Council (UNSC).
- Seek negotiated settlements to a range of conflicts around the world and block sales of weapons and military equipment that increase misery and death for non-combatants and have particularly destructive impacts on vulnerable peoples, notably women and children.
- Outlaw the use of torture, the sale of torture equipment and the rendition of people to countries where torture is not prohibited, and enforce the laws against it.
- Take proportionate measures to protect against terrorism, ensuring that civil liberties are not undermined in the process, that communities are not scapegoated and that action reflects a genuine assessment of the threat to our security. We need targeted policing and security service activities, not mass surveillance, prisons that rehabilitate those convicted of terrorism offences and effective programmes to prevent radicalisation and to deradicalise individuals.
- Uphold the principles of freedom of speech and peaceful protest, including support for vulnerable communities of all religious faiths and none.

In relation to specific international challenges around election time:

- We *opposed military interventions* in Afghanistan, Libya and Iraq, and will oppose all future interventions that lack a sufficient moral, legal and democratic mandate or when military action risks being counter-productive, for example by providing fertile recruitment, fundraising and propaganda opportunities. We will instead advocate for regional solutions to conflicts and for the UK to take a lead in advancing diplomatic, economic and political solutions to the threats posed by terrorist groups such as ISIS and Boko Haram.
- We would provide humanitarian support for the *millions of refugees* displaced by these conflicts.
- We seek a just, sustainable and peaceful solution to the *Arab-Israeli conflict*, based on mutual recognition of the rights to independent statehood for Palestinians and Israelis. We condemn human rights violations by both parties and the oppression and disproportionate use of aggression by the Israeli government against the people of Gaza. We seek to suspend the EU–Israel Association Agreement.
- We condemn state-sanctioned breaches of human rights by countries such as China, Syria, Sudan and Pakistan, as well as by individuals or organisations, and we advocate the use of sanctions and legal action via the International Criminal Court for those violating international human rights standards.
- We would work to support a negotiated settlement between *Russia and Ukraine*, while developing a new security structure for the region involving the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe, with opposition to arms transfers and military interventions in regional and internal conflicts.

INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENT ON CLIMATE CHANGE

A global climate disaster can be prevented only if the whole world works together. The Green Party will make it its main foreign policy priority to secure a major new international agreement, in particular at the UN meeting in Paris in December 2015, with a wide-ranging workable plan to arrest climate change and share global resources more evenly. The basis of this agreement should be Contraction and Convergence (C&C).

C&C means:

- Allowing countries that currently emit very little carbon dioxide to increase their emissions, using their energy resources to reduce poverty and improve their people's well-being.
- Requiring all other countries to reduce their emissions to a small per capita limit, fixed to be consistent with a global limit that keeps temperature rises below 2 degrees C.
- Recognising the special responsibility of countries such as the UK that have become wealthy from 200 years of fossil-fuel-based industrialisation. Some of this wealth will need to be shared with poorer countries that have left their fossil fuels in the ground and their forests still standing.

In these ways, by an agreed date, every citizen of the world will have a fair and equal share of global emissions potential. Being rich will no longer permit people to unfairly affect the whole world's atmosphere and climate.

SECURITY AND DEFENCE

The UK's recent history has been scarred by involvement in ill-advised military interventions that have undermined our national and international security. The Green Party opposed these interventions, which have brought havoc to Iraq and Libya and only fragile gains in Afghanistan, as well as driving an increased terrorist threat closer to home – all at the cost of many precious lives and vast amounts of money and other resources that could have been better used for other needs.

Green MP Caroline Lucas challenged the PM in the debate on 26 September 2014 on military action in Iraq

'Will the Prime Minister recognise that killing extremists does not kill their ideas? On the contrary – it can often feed their ideas, and for that reason the former MI6 head of counter-terrorism has said that getting Saudi Arabia and Iran around a negotiating table would be far more effective than bombing. Why are we not hearing far more from this Prime Minister about the political and diplomatic solutions to this situation, rather than reaching for the military solution, which could undermine them?'

We will restructure and update the UK's security and defence establishments and services so that they contribute to the international good. We will:

- Pursue a policy of '*defensive defence*', which threatens no one yet makes it clear that threats and attacks will be resisted.
- Take a leading role in *preventing violent conflict, genocide and war crimes overseas* through (i) helping to develop local capacities to avoid, manage and resolve conflicts; and (ii) enhancing the UK's well-respected role in genuine peacekeeping and the protection of non-combatant communities.
- Develop policies and programmes for '*environmental defence and disaster mitigation and relief*', drawing on the skills and activities of our current military forces and increasing gender representation and training to equip the UK to contribute more effectively in these kinds of human security emergencies.
- *Diminish dependence on arms sales* through a halt to government subsidies and introducing a strict licensing regime to prevent sales of weapons and military equipment to undemocratic regimes and those that violate human rights (including, at the present time, Israel and Saudi Arabia).
- Look after *veterans* and their families.

INTERNATIONAL DISARMAMENT AND SECURITY AGREEMENTS

The Green Party will ensure that UK security and defence policies are consistent with international law, including international humanitarian law, and that the UK implements in good faith all relevant obligations in the following *international treaties*: the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty, the Outer Space Treaty, the Biological Weapons Convention, the Chemical Weapons Convention, the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, the Mine Ban Treaty, the Cluster Munitions Convention, the Arms Trade Treaty, the UN Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, and the Geneva Protocols.

We will:

- Enhance UK cooperation with civil society and international agencies to implement relevant UN Security Council Resolutions, including UNSC Resolutions 1325, 1820 and 1889, dealing with the role of *gender violence* in war and the necessity *to involve women at all levels in preventing war* and building peace and security.
- Save a massive £100 billion over the next 30 years by *cancelling Trident replacement and decommissioning existing nuclear forces and facilities*.
- Enhance international security and non-proliferation by initiating and/or joining negotiations on a universally applicable *nuclear abolition treaty* to prohibit the use, deployment, development, production, stockpiling and transfer of nuclear weapons and requiring their complete elimination.
- Initiate and/or join negotiations on new international treaties and laws to *prohibit* the development, deployment and use of *autonomous weapons (such as 'killer robots'), depleted uranium weapons*, weapon systems that are intended for use in and from *outer space*, and weapons that leave *explosive remnants and toxic legacies* in war-affected communities, while mandating the protection of civilians from any new weapons developments for the future.

Green MEP Keith Taylor and Palestine

Keith Taylor is a member of the European Parliament's delegation to Palestine and has visited the Occupied Territories. As part of his work, Keith has called for Israel to end its practice of detaining Palestinians without charge, and has supported his constituents in boycott campaigns relating to goods made in illegal Israeli settlements. Keith has long campaigned for the recognition of Palestine and has put his name to a successful Resolution calling on the European Parliament to recognise Palestine as a state.

Joining up the policies

So what do war, terrorism, food policy and the oil industry have to do with each other? If we didn't depend on oil from the Middle East, we wouldn't need to invent reasons to go to war there when supply lines are threatened. If we weren't involved in wars in the Middle East, terrorism here would lose its raison d'être. With less fossil fuel we would have to expand renewables and grow more of our own food, making us far less vulnerable to blockade in any future war. Security policy is not just about tanks, it's also about acting responsibly and building resilience at home.

It's another virtuous circle..

EUROPE

The Green Party recognises that the UK is part of Europe and that we cannot cut ourselves off from our geography or its political realities. Our message on Europe is positive, not based on fear and nostalgia.

Much EU action has been progressive: safeguarding basic rights, peace and security achieved through mutual understanding, environmental protection, the spread of culture and ideas, and regulation of the financial system. And in other areas, such as welfare policy, open discussion and coordination are useful.

However, we prioritise local self-reliance rather than the EU's unsustainable economics of free trade and growth. We would not adopt the Euro, which cannot work properly without much deeper political integration, and this would be contrary to our policy of subsidiarity.

We support the proposal to have an in–out referendum so that the British people can have their say. This is because much has changed since the UK joined the Common Market in 1974. Endless debate on membership is a diversion from more important matters, such as ending inequality and adapting our economy to One-Planet Living.

So it's yes to Europe, yes to reform of the EU but also yes to a referendum. This is the policy that led to the election of an additional Green MEP, Molly Scott Cato, in the South West last year.

MIGRATION

Migration is a fact of life. People have always moved within countries and between countries. Much of the UK's language, culture and way of life has been enriched by successive new arrivals over thousands of years. Most families living here will have members of their extended family who live abroad or include members who were born abroad – 5 million British citizens live abroad, around 2 million of them in the EU. We take it for granted that we can move to live where we like within our country, and increasingly within Europe and further afield, as others do.

Much of the time, migration is voluntary, is on a relatively small scale and is a positive benefit for all concerned. But, increasingly, people are being forced to move because:

- Climate change affects their environment so that it can no longer support them;
- The economic opportunities in their home country are so limited that they leave home to work abroad; or
- War, natural disasters or political repression lead them to become refugees.

These pressures lead to growing numbers of people seeking to come to the UK from the EU and elsewhere. But it is wrong to scapegoat immigrants for problems with housing, education, health or local authority services. These problems are the result of successive governments' policy failure, which the rest of this manifesto is designed to put right.

The Green Party believes that, in the medium to long term, we must reduce the pressures that lead to involuntary migration. We will:

- Seek through our international policies to reduce war and discourage repressive regimes that lead to the creation of refugees.
- Make a global deal on climate change a priority of our foreign policy, and help poorer countries cope with the climate change.
- Seek to promote ecologically sustainable development in the poorer parts of the world, so that there is greater equality between the richer and poorer nations.
- Promote policies in the EU that improve opportunities across the Union and refocus on social and environmental benefits, rather than economic liberalisation.

We accept that these policies will take time to work and that we must address immigration as it is here and now. Some controls on immigration will be needed for the foreseeable future; for now, we reject an open borders approach. We also reject the imposition of an arbitrary numerical cap on net migration. The latter in particular is impossible to achieve (especially given that there is no control on the numbers emigrating) and leads to many individual injustices.

Any controls must respect the following principles:

- Mutual legal obligations within the EU on freedom of movement.
- International obligations to accept refugees, whether seeking sanctuary from wars, political repression or climate change.
- Respect for the integrity of families. The arrival of a grandmother might well have no direct economic effect, but her contribution to family life may contribute hugely to our society. We would in particular
 - abolish the policy that requires a British citizen to have an income of at least £18,600 a year before their partner can come to live in the UK, which discriminates against poorer people,
 - make it much easier for adult dependants, mainly elderly parents, of British citizens to come and live here.
- No restrictions on foreign students. Foreign students contribute hugely to our education system, both financially and in terms of the wider perspectives they bring. They also take back to their home countries skills that they have learnt here that will be valuable at home and positive attitudes towards the UK. In particular we would
 - allow students to work in the UK for two years after graduation;
 - widen the Youth Mobility Scheme to allow those from poorer countries to participate.
- No priority simply for economic reasons. We would in particular aim to retain more of those trained in the UK in the health service so that we have less need to take health service workers from countries that can ill afford to lose them.

We would also:

- Review the rules for those wishing to set up or do business here to ensure they are not discriminatory against smaller businesses.
- Not simply accept people just because they are rich. The London housing market in particular has been gravely distorted by the number of rich migrants buying property, bidding up prices all along the housing chain.
- Ensure that no prospective immigrant is held in detention. As a matter of urgency, the administrative detention of children and pregnant women should cease immediately.
- Review the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002, particularly with regard to issues of access to legal advice, childcare and levels of subsistence allowance, and reintroduce Legal Aid for reasonable levels of immigration and asylum work.

In addition, once immigrants have arrived, we would:

- Assist integration by making available free or affordable English or Welsh language lessons to all new immigrants who want them, costing about £200 million a year.
- Open up ways for existing irregular migrants who have been here for three years to become legal. In particular, a legal status must be provided for people who have not succeeded in their claim for humanitarian protection but who cannot be returned to their country of origin owing to the political situation there.

- Ratify the International Labour Organization's Convention on Domestic Workers.
- Review asylum procedures to ensure that destitution plays no role in the asylum process by allowing those seeking sanctuary to work.
- Ensure that those who have been *trafficked* are not subject to summary deportation; we must protect the victims of trafficking. They should receive a temporary right to stay and have the same right to apply to remain as others seeking to migrate.

TRADE, AID AND GRASSROOTS DEVELOPMENT

People around the world have their own strategies and priorities for improving their lives and communities. 'Development' should not be directed by rich countries, which too often have their own business interests in mind. Instead we need to provide the political space, democratic voice and appropriate resources to enable people in all countries to pursue their own chosen directions in ways that work for them.

International trade can benefit or harm the world's people, depending on its nature. Genuinely fair trade, alongside sustainable haulage practices, can bring benefits for all of us. But ever-growing trade, over ever-growing distances and with the sole aim of making a profit can make life difficult for workers and is a sure-fire way of exceeding the limits of our finite planet.

Similarly, the world's current structure of international institutions and trade rules can put less developed economies at a disadvantage, while making it easy for global corporations to buy up their land and resources. We need to work with others around the world to reform and reinvent these institutions so that they facilitate greater global equality and justice. The Green Party will:

- Advocate for ambitious sustainable development goals, including a commitment to end AIDS, TB and malaria; action to eliminate violence against women and girls; and practical measures to eradicate poverty and reduce inequality.
- Take real action to *end tax evasion and avoidance* and transfer mispricing by transnational corporations, which steals resources especially from poorer countries.
- Support global efforts to develop a *fairer global tax system*.
- Put a stop to the corporate takeover of *African food* by ending UK funding of the G8's New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition.
- Promote *fair trade*, in particular seeking to ensure that workers in poor countries receive decent pay and conditions within International Labour Organization (ILO) standards.
- Initiate democratic discussions, alongside international trade unions, citizen groups and the ILO, to investigate the potential for a *global minimum wage* to address in-work poverty and exploitation.
- Ensure *UK companies operating abroad* respect international human rights and environmental standards and do not encourage *corruption*, enforcing the UN Convention against Corruption and the OECD Anti-Bribery Convention, and reporting fully upon their activities.
- Ensure that every country has the political space to make its *own democratic choices*, without pressure to prise open its economy for 'free' trade. In particular, we oppose the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (see 'The Green Party opposes the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership' box).
- Ensure that trade deals allow poor countries to control their *economies*; we will take the UK out of trade agreements that go against this.
- Support the *rights of indigenous people* to control their own lands and resources.

The world has become a very unequal place. Rich countries such as the UK have benefited from global flows of wealth while poorer countries and groups have tended to lose out. Some transfers of resources from rich countries to poorer ones are therefore needed in order to redress the balance and allow poorer countries to improve living standards. We will:

- Fight for the writing-off of *international debts* for the poorest countries and limiting repayments for other low-income countries, to ensure they can fund decent public services for their people.
- Increase the *overseas aid budget* from 0.7% of GDP to 1.0% of GDP over the Parliament, costing around £6 billion a year in 2019. Aid will not be tied, and will be distributed in ways that are focused on poverty eradication, supporting grassroots initiatives, women's rights and environmental sustainability while respecting local priorities.
- Help poorer countries to fund climate change adaptation and build resilient communities through the UN Adaptation Fund. We recognise that the UK owes them a *climate debt* for our disproportionately high emissions and contributions to global pollution and climate damage.

The Green Party opposes the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)

TTIP is globalisation in its worst form, designed to submit democratically elected governments to the will of private corporations. Companies will be able to take legal action against governments that they think threaten their profits. National policies in EU countries for health, environmental, consumer and social protection could be challenged by companies from anywhere in the world in private international tribunals, run by corporate lawyers.

Under TTIP:

- Attempts to bring the National Health Service and the railways back into public ownership could be financially penalised or blocked;
- Authorisations for genetically modified organisms may be accelerated at European level and risk assessment standards lowered; and
- Regulation of banks and the financial industry would be harder, if not impossible.

CHAPTER 14

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

Imagine crime falling year on year because the causes of crime are being dealt with – unemployment, insecurity at home, school exclusions, inequality, mental health issues, drugs. Imagine a prison population at the European average rather than way over it. Picture prisons in public hands and actually rehabilitating prisoners. Have you been a victim of crime? Picture restorative justice, which gives you a voice and helps the offender to take responsibility and make amends.

It's been said that, the more dysfunctional a society is, the more laws it has. Here is how dysfunctional the UK has become:

- Under Margaret Thatcher there were 1,724 new laws per year;
- Under John Major there were 2,402 per year;
- Under Tony Blair, 2,663 per year.

The UK imprisons more people than any other country in Europe. Under the Coalition, the prison population reached an all-time high of 88,179 in December 2011, and the number of front-line prison officers dropped by 30% between 2010 and 2013. This is a picture of a very uneasy society.

THE CONTEXT OF CRIME

Crime has a context:

- 60% of offenders have no qualifications at all;
- 48% have literacy skills below those expected of an 11 year old;
- 65% have numeracy skills below those expected of an 11 year old;
- 67% were unemployed at the time of imprisonment;
- 49% of prisoners ran away from home as a child;
- 41% were excluded from school;
- 71% suffer from two or more mental disorders;
- 70% of offenders had been drinking at the time the offences for which they were imprisoned were committed;
- There is more crime in more unequal societies.

So: education, employment and security for all – this is the heart of Green Party crime policy. We would:

- Treat *drug addiction* as a health issue (see Chapter 6 for our health policy).
- Restrict police use of random *stop and search powers*, which damage police and youth relations.
- Improve the design of our cities to provide *safer streets* and public spaces.
- Focus on *crime prevention measures*, including more community policing under local democratic control, more local police stations and the return of bus conductors and others who have an important effect on social order.
- Oppose the *privatisation of policing* and establish a Royal Commission on Policing as a first step towards delivering a service that's fit for purpose.
- Provide proper funding for *Women's Refuges* for survivors of domestic violence, and make domestic abuse a specific criminal offence.
- Work to change attitudes towards *rape*, including improving initial responses to women, early evidence collection and access to justice.
- Abolish *Police and Crime Commissioners*, and return control of the police to local government.

Green London Assembly Member Jenny Jones saves Police Road Safety Unit

In 2009, Jenny fought the closure of the Metropolitan Police Commercial Vehicle Education Unit, which instructs HGV drivers on road sharing and awareness of vulnerable road users. This unit has now been reinstated within the traffic police section.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE AND OFFENDER REHABILITATION

Once people have offended, what next? Punishment for its own sake (retributive justice) gets us nowhere, and that's why the Green Party would greatly expand the use of restorative justice, with the offender making up to the victim and the community. This gives victims a voice and helps offenders to see the effects of what they have done. This should enable us substantially to reduce the numbers in prison and reduce reoffending. In particular, we believe there are far too many children in the penal system.

What happens when prisoners are returned to the community? Nearly 50% of adult offenders released between April 2011 and March 2012 reoffended. This is a real indictment of what happens to people in prison. The Green Party would:

- Oppose the *privatisation of the probation services*.
- Provide access to *real work and education*, the work to include repairing damage done by crime.
- Provide access to *artistic and creative facilities*.
- Provide access to *literacy and numeracy classes* from the first day of imprisonment.
- Operate a *smaller prison system*, saving £5.5 billion over the course of the Parliament.
- Grant *prisoners the right to vote*.
- Oppose the use of the *death penalty* abroad.

Greens in power carry out our policies

Restorative justice works. In Green-led Brighton, the number of young people entering the criminal justice system in the city fell over the three successive years to October 2013 as the Council's youth crime prevention team joined with police to help young people understand the impact of their behaviour and make amends.

CHAPTER 15

A POSTSCRIPT

It does all join up – One fine day in April 2019

You leave work at 5 pm on the dot, and check the bus stop's electronic display – your bus home is due in 3 minutes. It glides to a stop, electric motor whirring quietly, and you beep on with your smartcard. The buses are not-for-profit now, and cheaper than they were four years ago.

You grab a seat and dig out your phone to check your bank balance because today is pay day! You're working as a cleaner at the hospital, so with the £9.60 minimum wage you get around £1,500 a month before tax. The rent controls that were recently brought in mean you don't pay too much to your landlord and, since your home was super-insulated through the Green Warm Deal, your gas bill's not much either. With all that, you're getting by pretty comfortably, and managing to save up a bit to buy a house.

The bus stops by your son's nursery, where all the kids go free, and he comes tumbling out giggling. Together you walk round the corner to your gran's new council house for a cup of tea. Her carer stays to chat for a few minutes before heading off to visit his next client. He says that since social care is free now, and much better funded, he's finding the work a lot more rewarding and might make a career of it. Your gran is cheerful too, happy to be back on her feet after her recent stay in hospital, and glad the whole thing was noticed early and dealt with quickly so she can get on with her life.

Later, back at home, a child from down the road knocks on your door to ask if your daughter can play out at the park. They are friends from school, the only two kids out of the 20 in their class who have packed lunches now that school dinners are free. They head off to the park's new play area, promising to pick up some milk at the Post Office on their way back.

You sit down at your laptop and start planning your next holiday, two weeks on the beach in Cornwall. It's a long trek, but the train tickets cost less than you expected and there's a local line that gets you practically to the campsite gate....

CHAPTER 16

IT DOES ALL ADD UP: THE FINANCIAL APPENDIX

In 2010 the major election issue was the economy, and in particular the state of the public finances. The Coalition parties pledged to close the deficit – the gap between government spending and government income. They have not done so; the gap between spending and income in 2009 of 11% of GDP has narrowed, but was still 5% in 2014. This is hardly surprising because the other parties' election manifestos gave no costed plans for how they would reduce the deficit. They made promises but gave no details. We were treated to post-election surprises such as increased VAT and huge cuts to essential public services such as benefits, libraries, children's centres and mental health support. By contrast, the Green Party produced a worked-out financial plan in its 2010 manifesto.

Again in this manifesto, we are providing a costed plan for how we would protect and improve our NHS, schools and public services, and pay for them with fairer, more progressive taxation. We use current government data and show exactly how we would do things differently. In this financial plan, we take no account of any extra money that could be available to government as a result of 'Regaining control of our money' (see the box in Chapter 9) – instead, these plans are based on the real-world current economic environment and on strict assumptions about the effects of changes.

Although it has not been our prime objective to end the current account deficit (that is, including expenditure other than investment) by the end of the Parliament, these plans show how we would do it.

After a brief note on territorial coverage, there are three sections – our basic economic assumptions, our plans for spending and our plans for taxation. We conclude with the overall effect on government finances and on the gap between spending and income. We are publishing separately an illustrative costing for Basic Income.

NOTE ON TERRITORIAL COVERAGE

This is the manifesto of the Green Party of England and Wales. Separate sister Green parties cover Scotland and Northern Ireland. Many public services are devolved, with the Scottish Parliament, the Welsh Assembly or the Northern Ireland Assembly taking responsibility. However, most decisions on government expenditure and on taxation are ultimately taken on a UK basis, this is a UK general election and, despite the fact that this Green Party covers only England and Wales, and to maintain consistency and comparability, all the figures in this chapter are UK figures.

ECONOMIC ASSUMPTIONS

The most important assumption is what the government assumes about the growth of the economy. If the economy grows, the revenues from taxation will be larger.

Both Labour and the Coalition made optimistic assumptions about growth in 2010. We based our 2010 calculations on lower growth assumptions. In the event, the economy barely grew in the middle of the period and, although we were less wrong than Labour or the Coalition, we were still some way out. Many of the Coalition's problems have their origin in this extraordinary optimism about growth. The figures are as follows:

Growth in real GDP, assumed in 2010 and actual (%)	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Cumulative 2010–14
Labour assumption (from March 2010 Budget)	2.00	3.00	3.25	3.25	3.25	15.6
Coalition assumption (from June 2010 Budget)	1.20	2.30	2.80	2.90	2.70	12.5
Green Party assumption (underlying 2010 manifesto)	2.00	2.50	2.00	2.00	2.00	10.9
Actual growth in real GDP (from ONS)	2.10	0.90	0.30	1.70	2.60	7.8

The Coalition is once again assuming growth of around 12% over the Parliament, at around 2.5% each year. We expect growth to slow a little over the Parliament. The figures are:

Assumed growth in real GDP (%)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	Cumulative 2015–19
Coalition assumption (from 2015 Budget)	2.50	2.30	2.30	2.30	2.40	12.4
Green Party assumption (underlying this manifesto)	2.50	2.20	2.00	2.00	1.80	10.9

Using these figures we can then work out our prediction for real GDP in each of the five years of the Parliament.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

All our figures throughout this manifesto, for both spending and revenues, are in real 2015 terms. Our government spending figures are worked out as follows. We use the current government plans for real terms spending in 2015 as a baseline (that is, we repeat the same figure for each year), so we are not taking into account the Coalition's overall plans to cut public spending up to 2018. We then express what we'd do differently in terms of how much we'd increase or reduce each item relative to this baseline figure. In most cases there is some phasing of expenditure, recognising in particular that our changes cannot realistically start with a full year's spending in 2015.

Our additional expenditures include a line for changed interest on the national debt. Like the Coalition, we would fund the continuing deficit by borrowing. If we reduce the deficit more slowly than the Coalition's plans, we would pay extra interest on the accumulated debt, and this line reflects that.

Our proposed savings are as follows:

Green Party proposed savings (£ billion)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Savings on tax credits through introduction of living wage	1.2	2.4	2.4	2.4	2.4
Revenue savings as a result of railway nationalisation	0.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Not replacing Trident	0.3	3.3	3.3	3.3	3.3
Prison savings due to fewer inmates	0.5	0.5	1.0	1.5	2.0
Reduce spending on major roads	0.0	1.5	3.0	4.5	6.0
Efficiency savings on base government expenditure	1.1	2.2	3.3	4.5	5.6
Scrap the Help to Buy scheme	0.3	0.6	0.6	0.6	0.6
Total savings	3.5	11.6	14.7	17.8	21.0

Our proposed additional expenditures are as follows:

Green Party proposed additional spending (£ billion)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Economy					
Equity for the Green Investment Bank	0.5	0.5	1.0	2.0	5.0
Public sector costs of introducing the living wage	0.4	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.8
Additional staff for HMRC	1.0	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0
Establishing community banks network	0.2	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.5
The Earth					
Funding for monitoring of micro-chipping of dogs	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.01
Extra funding for flood defences	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Government as insurer of last resort	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1
Increased government funding for R&D	0.9	1.9	2.8	3.8	4.7
Energy					
Major investment in renewable generation and the National Grid	2.0	6.0	8.0	9.0	10.0
R&D for newer renewables	0.0	0.5	0.5	0.5	1.0
Buildings insulation, mainly houses	5.3	9.9	9.9	9.9	9.9
Improving energy efficiency in industry	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Health					
Resolve current NHS funding gap	8.4	12.0	12.0	12.0	12.0
NHS annual additions for ageing	0.0	1.4	2.8	4.2	5.7
Increase in Carer's Allowance	0.8	1.2	1.2	1.2	1.2
Free social care for the elderly	3.8	7.9	8.2	8.7	9.1
Extra cost of organic food in schools and hospitals	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Subsidy on fresh fruit and vegetables (matches unhealthy food tax)	0.0	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7
Local government and constitutional					
Fund to buy out PFIs	0.5	2.5	1.0	0.5	0.5
Restoring local authority finances	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Increase spending on recycling and waste disposal	1.0	3.0	3.0	4.0	4.0
Restore cuts to Legal Aid	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.7
Social security					
Greater incentives to work while on benefits	4.0	5.0	6.0	7.0	8.0
Net cost of increased Child Benefit	0.0	15.7	15.8	16.0	16.1
Net cost of change to Citizen's Pension	0.0	25.7	25.1	24.6	24.0
Restore the cut in Council Tax Benefit	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Extra funding for disability	0.9	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8
Housing					
Expansion of social housing	2.5	3.5	4.5	4.5	4.5
Removal of the bedroom tax and other Housing Benefit cuts	1.2	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.3
Right to rent scheme	0.1	0.3	0.5	1.0	2.0

Our proposed additional expenditures are as follows (continued):

Green Party proposed additional spending (£ billion)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Education, training and young people					
Free universal early education and childcare	2.0	4.0	6.0	7.0	8.0
Restore education cuts – schools	3.5	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0
Free school meals	0.3	2.0	2.0	2.0	2.0
Smaller class sizes	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.5
Restore the Education Maintenance Allowance	0.3	0.5	0.7	0.7	0.7
Additional funding for further education	0.8	1.5	1.5	1.5	1.5
Increase funding for apprenticeships	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Package of youth measures	0.6	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1
Pay salaries for foster carers	0.4	0.9	0.9	0.9	0.9
Transport					
Subsidise public transport to reduce fares	0.9	1.7	1.7	1.7	1.7
Bring railways into public ownership	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1	0.1
Interest on £23 billion debt once rail in public ownership	0.0	0.0	0.0	1.1	1.1
Extra annual expenditure on walking and cycling	0.9	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8
Free local travel for young people	2.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Global					
Increase aid to 1% of GDP	0.8	2.3	3.5	4.8	6.1
Provide free English classes for immigrants	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Miscellaneous					
Additional funding for Women’s and Rape Crisis Centres	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03
Increase funding for the arts	0.3	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5
Reinstate Equality and Human Rights Commission funding	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03	0.03
Increased interest on the national debt	1.0	3.2	5.3	8.0	11.0
Total new spending	60.3	156.6	169.0	182.5	197.8

Finally, to get to our overall spending plans, we take the baseline plans for expenditure, add on our proposed extra expenditure above, and subtract our proposed savings:

Green Party proposed total government expenditure (£ billion)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
2015 baseline	743	743	743	743	743
Add proposed additional spending	60	157	169	183	198
Subtract proposed savings	3	12	15	18	21
Total government expenditure	799	888	897	907	919

TAXATION AND REVENUES

We start from the government's plans for its revenues, converted to the 2015 price base using the GDP deflator. In this case we assume that the revenues are proportional to GDP. Because we have assumed that GDP is lower than the government assumption (because we expect less growth), our baseline revenues are also *lower*. As with the spending figures, there is some phasing to allow changes to come into effect.

Our proposed increases in revenues are as follows:

Green Party proposed revenue increases (£ billion)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Wealth tax	0.0	10.0	15.0	20.0	25.0
Robin Hood tax	0.0	5.0	15.0	20.0	20.0
Tax avoidance and evasion	6.0	12.0	18.0	24.0	30.0
Raise additional rate of income tax	1.1	2.2	2.2	2.3	2.3
Increase corporation tax	4.2	12.5	12.5	12.5	12.5
Remove capital gains tax allowance	1.5	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.3
Reform of inheritance tax	0.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Reform of Council Tax	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.1	0.1
Reintroduce fuel duty escalator	2.2	4.3	6.5	8.6	10.8
VAT and fuel duty on aviation	5.0	16.0	16.0	16.0	16.0
Introduce environmental taxes	1.0	2.0	3.0	4.0	5.0
Increase alcohol and tobacco taxes	0.0	1.4	2.8	4.2	5.7
Unhealthy food tax	0.0	6.7	6.7	6.7	6.7
Abolition of mortgage interest relief for landlords	2.9	5.8	5.8	5.8	5.8
Increase in income tax and NI because of living wage	0.5	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.1
Abolition of upper NI threshold	0.0	14.5	29.8	30.5	31.1
Reduction of tax relief on pensions	0.0	10.4	21.3	21.8	22.2
Total increase in revenues	24.4	108.0	159.9	181.8	198.6

Changes that will reduce government revenues are as follows:

Green Party revenue decreases (£ billion)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Increase tax-free amount on Rent a Room Scheme	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Write off student loans	1.1	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2
End student tuition fees	0.0	0.3	0.9	1.4	2.0
Replace student maintenance loans with grants	0.0	0.1	0.4	0.7	1.0
Reduce employers' National Insurance	0.0	10.0	15.0	20.0	25.0
Abolish BBC licence fee	1.6	3.2	3.2	3.2	3.2
Allow FE colleges to reclaim VAT	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2
Reduce VAT on restaurants, tourism, etc. to 5%	3.0	6.0	6.0	6.0	6.0
VAT reduction to 5% for home renovation	0.8	1.6	1.6	1.6	1.6
Total revenue decreases	6.7	23.8	29.6	35.5	41.3

This leads to the following overall government revenues:

Green Party total government revenues (£ billion)	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Government baseline revenues on Green Party growth assumption	667	693	710	726	741
Add Green Party additional taxation	24	108	160	182	199
Subtract Green Party revenue reductions	7	24	30	35	41
Total government revenues	685	777	840	872	898

GREEN PARTY TAX AND SPEND PLANS AS A PROPORTION OF GDP

To sum up, this leads to the following predictions for the deficit and for our plans as a proportion of GDP compared with the Coalition's plans:

Green Party predicted deficit and proportions of GDP	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019
Green Party prediction for GDP (£ billion, real 2015 terms)	1,885	1,926	1,965	2,004	2,040
Green Party proposed total government expenditure (£ billion)	799	888	897	907	919
Green Party total government revenues (£ billion)	685	777	840	872	898
Green Party predicted deficit (£ billion)	114	111	57	35	21
Green Party spending as % of GDP	42.4%	46.1%	45.6%	45.3%	45.1%
Green Party revenues as % of GDP	36.3%	40.3%	42.7%	43.5%	44.0%
Green Party deficit as % of GDP	6.1%	5.8%	2.9%	1.7%	1.0%
Coalition plans for spending as % of GDP	39.4%	38.0%	36.7%	36.0%	36.0%
Coalition plans for revenues as % of GDP	35.4%	36.0%	36.1%	36.2%	36.3%
Coalition plans for deficit as % of GDP	4.0%	2.0%	0.6%	-0.2%	-0.3%
Coalition plans for deficit (£ billion)	75	39	12	-5	-7

Existing government plans for investment amount to around £70 billion by 2019. Our plans add around a further net £5 billion of investment, making £75 billion in all, which is 3.7% of GDP. We consider that it is appropriate for the government to borrow to fund investment. Accordingly, our plans show a surplus of 2.7% (3.7% minus 1.0%) on current account by the end of the Parliament.



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