



Green Party

SHEFFIELD GREEN PARTY

2015 MANIFESTO

FOR THE GENERAL ELECTION AND COUNCIL ELECTIONS



PUTTING THE PUBLIC AT THE HEART OF THE NHS



REBUILDING OUR ECONOMY SO EVERYONE GETS A FAIR SHARE



BRINGING THE RAILWAYS BACK INTO PUBLIC HANDS



KEEPING EDUCATION FREE FOR ALL



TAKING ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE TO PROTECT OUR PLANET

WE LIVE IN UNSETTLING TIMES.

Many of the securities that our parents and grandparents fought for – a functioning National Health Service, free education, and an affordable home – now look out of reach for most of us.

Coupled with this, climate change is bringing unpredictable and threatening weather patterns.

People feel let down by politicians, and yet there has been an explosion in political activism. People want to do things differently and aren't afraid to be bold and challenging.

We believe that public services should be for the benefit of the public, not sold off in bits;

We believe that education is worth investing in and not something that should mean a lifetime of debt;

We believe in leaving behind a better world for our children and grandchildren.

This is the only world we have and its welfare, above all things, should be the highest priority for us all.

Politics should work for the benefit of all, not just those who shout the loudest or have the deepest pockets.

We believe in The Common Good.

A VOTE FOR THE GREEN PARTY IS A VOTE FOR THE COMMON GOOD.



PUTTING THE PUBLIC AT THE HEART OF THE NHS

MORE MONEY IN THE NHS AND SOCIAL CARE - AND AN END TO PRIVATISATION.

We will maintain a publicly-funded, publicly-provided health service that is free at the point of use.

We oppose privatisation of the health service for profit. We aim to bring privatised facilities back into public ownership as soon as possible.

The Green Councillors' budget proposals could have provided £1million extra for disabled adults' social care as well as preventing all the cuts to libraries and supporting the 30,000 poorest households in Sheffield.

The Green Party will provide local authorities with an extra £10 billion a year to allow them to restore essential services in social care.

By creating a more equal society, we will tackle a root cause of many health problems, especially mental health. Teenage pregnancies and drug/alcohol/tobacco abuse are lower in more equal societies.

Our transport, air quality, energy and housing policies will contribute to health & wellbeing and reduce health inequalities. Increasing equality is the best way to improve quality of life, not just for the poorest but for all sections of society.

We played an active part in the Sheffield Save our NHS campaign over the past few years, including supporting the Save our NHS march from Jarrow to London which passed through Sheffield in August 2014.

Green Councillors do lots of individual casework helping disabled residents and their families to fight for better care services.

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Green Councillors in Central ward gave grant funding to increase access to the Shipshape community project in Sharrow. Shipshape helps local people with a job club, chronic pain service, health champions and cooking-on-a-budget groups.



REBUILDING OUR ECONOMY SO EVERYONE GETS A FAIR SHARE

A LIVING WAGE AND A BAN ON ZERO HOURS CONTRACTS.

We will immediately raise the minimum wage to a Living Wage (now £7.85 an hour in Sheffield) and to £10 an hour by 2020.

We will end unfair practices like zero hour contracts and unpaid internships.

Green Councillors started the campaign for the Living Wage in 2009 – it is now council policy. We continued to push for better wages from council sub-contractors, in Sheffield's Fairness Commission and when opposing Labour's plan to privatise the Learning Disability Service.

6000 NEW JOBS, BRINGING £300M A YEAR TO THE SHEFFIELD CITY REGION

One million new jobs nationwide in improved public transport, renewable energy and energy-saving measures for homes and businesses would transform the economy. By 2022, this would create 6000 jobs in the Sheffield City Region, reduce carbon emissions by 16% and save nearly £1bn from our annual energy bill.

We will invest in jobs and training in low-carbon food growing, manufacturing, construction and engineering to ensure the UK leads the world in developing 21st century technologies. Renewable energy will provide a sustainable use for Sheffield's manufacturing skills.

In the March 2014 Council budget, the Green Councillors proposed to invest in solar panels on council housing. This has now been adopted by the Council. It will reduce fuel bills for tenants, create jobs in the renewable energy sector and set up a long term income stream for the Council.

LOCAL BUSINESSES MAKING A LIVING, NOT MULTI-NATIONALS TAKING MILLIONS OUT OF THE LOCAL ECONOMY

Supermarkets work by selling more goods with fewer jobs. Transporting food causes a lot of carbon emissions.

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The Federation of Small Businesses in South Yorkshire backed our call for a supermarket levy. It would raise £6m a year in Sheffield and would assist small businesses.

Green Councillors put forward alternatives to the failed New Retail Quarter plans and worked with city centre businesses and residents.

We support small businesses and social enterprises offering these services. We will work towards transferring Sheffield's waste contract from Veolia to local companies, to create more jobs and reduce carbon emissions.

TACKLING INEQUALITY AND REBALANCING BRITAIN'S WEALTH

The UK is the sixth richest country in the world but also one of the most unequal. People go hungry, live in overcrowded conditions and struggle to afford to heat their homes. Many are in low paid jobs or seeking work and caught out by harsh benefit sanctions.

At the same time, the rich have got richer and consume far more than is needed for a healthy, happy life. Britain's 100 richest people now own as much as the poorest 19 million people together. And the gap is increasing.

Cllr Jillian Creasy lobbied to get better windows for tenants in Broomhall, saving on heating costs and reducing fuel consumption.

We will curb corporate excesses by limiting pay ratios to 10:1 in any organisation so the highest paid earns no more than 10 times the lowest. We will introduce a 2% Wealth Tax on the richest 1%.

A FAIRER TAX SYSTEM AND A GUARANTEED BASIC INCOME

We will make tax fairer by introducing a basic income for everyone. It will be paid for by abolishing personal tax allowances. We will raise the top rate of income tax to 60%.

We will move towards a 'polluter pays' tax system, with environmental taxes that match the cost to society of harmful and polluting activities. We will reduce fuel bills by bringing energy suppliers back within public control.

ABOLISHING THE BEDROOM TAX, COUNCIL TAX AND VAT

We will abolish the bedroom tax. We will replace Council Tax with a Land Value Tax, based on the value of the property and paid by the owner not the occupier.

We will abolish VAT because it hits low income households disproportionately hard and is a burden on small businesses. We will replace it with income tax so people only pay tax on the money they get.

Revenue-raising proposals for the next Parliament include:

- Raising £35bn a year in Wealth Tax on the top 1%
- Raising £50bn extra by tackling tax avoidance and evasion
- Raising up to £25bn a year from a Robin Hood tax on share dealing
- Raising £20bn a year by ending subsidy on aviation fuel
- Saving £100bn over its 30-year lifetime by scrapping Trident
- Saving £15bn from road expansion schemes
- Saving £2.4bn a year in tax credits by introducing a living wage

We campaigned against the bedroom tax and produced an information leaflet to help people affected by it in Sheffield.

Green Councillors in Sheffield proposed a fairer council tax support scheme instead of Labour's flat-rate council tax increase for the 30,000 households on the lowest incomes.

AND END TO AUSTERITY

Austerity is damaging and unnecessary. High quality public services are a sound investment. We oppose cuts because good public services must meet the needs of all parts of society. Properly delivered, public services reduce waste in public spending. Cuts, the austerity agenda and artificial targets make public services inefficient. Public services should be publicly accountable and not contracted out for private profit.



BRINGING THE RAILWAYS BACK INTO PUBLIC HANDS

Our railways should be publicly owned so the needs of the public come before private profit. We need to make sure rail travel is more attractive and cheaper than car travel, to tackle carbon emissions and air quality.

We will use £15bn from the Government's road expansion scheme to invest in making rail an affordable travel choice.

We would use the huge sums set aside for HS2 to improve Sheffield's local transport - reopening local stations and lines, extending Supertram and investing in safer streets and cycle routes

BETTER LOCAL TRANSPORT IN PUBLIC CONTROL

We will set local government free by giving local authorities and city regions the same powers as Transport for London to regulate public transport fares and routes for the benefit of local people.

We will ensure that existing contracts with local bus operators are made transparent to enable local oversight, accountability and value for money.

We will make sure money for local transport budgets are not spent elsewhere.

This goes further than the Sheffield City Region devolution deal.

In Sheffield, Greens have pressed for Quality Contracts with bus operators and successfully won Boxing Day and New Year bus services.

MAKING HEALTHY TRAVEL THE NATURAL CHOICE

We will develop ambitious plans to provide safe, attractive routes for walking and cycling, integrated with an improving public transport network.

This will reduce energy use and pollution and will offer healthy and sustainable travel options.

Green Councillors have worked for safer cycling routes, new cycle lanes, dropped kerbs and clearer markings, as well as getting cycle routes cleared of debris. We supported the Cycle Forum's successful campaign to keep safer speed limits on Penistone Road.

ROLLING OUT 20MPH ZONES CITYWIDE

We will roll out 20mph zones across all residential areas in Sheffield. The current patchwork of zones is ineffective and needlessly expensive. A citywide scheme would increase safety for all road users and encourage a progressive, shared-use transport system fit for all road users.

Main roads would not be included in the 20mph zone.

Green Councillors started the calls for 20mph zones in Sheffield in 2009 and have continued to push for a comprehensive scheme instead of confusing piecemeal projects.

IMPROVING AIR QUALITY

We will ensure that air quality is considered at every level of public decision-making until Britain complies with its legal obligations.

We will press for all building developments in Sheffield to take full account of the needs of local residents, including such aspects as green roofs, energy and water conservation, transport and business hours.

Poor air quality is largely due to private cars and causes 500 early deaths every year in Sheffield. Green Councillors got the Council's failing action plan back on the agenda, with a decisive approach to improve health and save lives. We called for an air quality impact assessment for planning applications. It was partly accepted but watered down by Labour.

MORE EMPTY HOMES BACK IN USE

Re-using empty homes consumes far less energy than building new ones and helps meet our need for affordable housing. We oppose the costly demolition of usable houses when more and more families need housing.

There are 2,300 long-term empty homes in Sheffield. We will put more resources into bringing them back into use and earn the New Homes Bonus for the city. The Council adopted our proposal to end council tax discounts on empty homes.

FREE ADVICE SERVICES

We will ensure there is adequate impartial advice on employment, debt, housing, benefits discrimination and other important issues.

We will expand the existing “mortgage rescue” scheme to help home-owners in debt and build up a stock of publicly-owned housing.

Sheffield Green Party campaigned against legal aid cuts affecting the city’s advice centres and proposed extra Council funding. Nationally, the Green Party was the first party to support the Justice for All campaign for access to legal advice on benefits, housing, employment and debt.

Our budget proposals included more resources for advice centres and to support the work of the Council’s Private Sector housing team to improve standards of rented housing in Sheffield.



KEEPING EDUCATION FREE FOR ALL

We will bring academies back into local authority control.

We will give more say to schools and teachers to use their judgment to teach pupils instead of a centralised national curriculum, performance-related pay and targets.

We will restore educational maintenance allowance (EMA) for 16 & 17 year olds. We will abolish university tuition fees.

Sheffield Green Party has actively supported campaigns in Sheffield to secure community nurseries, libraries, and post offices.

ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES THAT LISTEN AND HELP YOU GET YOUR VOICE HEARD

We will stand up for local residents on traffic, parking, crime, planning and licensing issues.

Green Councillors and activists have worked tirelessly to support local residents on traffic, parking, crime, planning and licensing. We have helped residents campaign about unfair permit parking charges. We have informed residents about planning and licensing applications that affect them.

LOCAL DECISION-MAKING AND A PROPER DEBATE ON DEVOLUTION

Decisions should be made at as local a level as possible to make politics more real and accessible.

No decision will be taken at a higher level where it can, more appropriately, be taken at a lower one.

We support calls for a Constitutional Convention to decide how power should be devolved throughout the UK.

Green Councillors called Council officers and “Streets Ahead” contractor Amey to account at a public meeting about failing to consult residents about cutting down mature trees on residential streets.

We called for public consultation on the Government’s “devolution” deal for Sheffield City Region, which would actually remove some local decision-making from Sheffield.

A FAIR VOTING SYSTEM

The current First Past the Post electoral system is unfair and stifles real political change. We will implement the proportional Additional Member System for local and national elections to make everyone’s vote count.

AN EFFECTIVE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

We believe in genuine restorative justice as a key feature of the criminal justice system, to help the victim and bring the offender back into the community. Our policies on tackling inequality will help reduce crime: levels of crime in Western countries are lower in more equal societies.

REFORM OF THE EU, WITH A REFERENDUM ON MEMBERSHIP

The European Union has set essential standards for peace, environmental protection, working conditions and human rights. Europe takes half of all Britain’s exported goods and services.

However, we believe the EU must be fundamentally transformed so it is democratically accountable to the peoples of Europe rather than corporate interests. We oppose the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) which threatens British legal protection and the NHS.

We believe a fairer world is a safer world. We can only be secure in the UK if cooperative global action is taken to tackle the linked crises of climate change and global inequality.

EU TRADE SANCTIONS TO ENCOURAGE JUSTICE AND PEACE FOR PALESTINE

We condemn Israeli aggression in Palestine. We call on the UN, the EU and the US government to ensure that Israel complies with international law. We support these calls by active participation in the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign, which aims to put pressure on the government of Israel to give equal rights to Palestinians. We will halt arms sales to Israel.

A PROGRESSIVE APPROACH TO MIGRATION

Immigration is used to score easy political points and plays on people's fears; the real issue is about the pressure on housing, decent jobs, education and health services. We will make sure these are available to all, not blame recent migrants or any other group of people.

We always take a humanitarian stance towards fellow humans. We call for fair and prompt treatment of all applicants, especially people escaping war, persecution and devastating climate changes, not with separate rules for the rich.

Foreign students bring £120m a year to Sheffield alone and enrich our culture.



TAKING ACTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE TO PROTECT OUR PLANET

REDUCING OUR IMPACT ON THE CLIMATE

Waste management strategies should first reduce waste, then re-use, repair and recycle.

We will set challenging targets and timetables for reducing greenhouse-gas emissions and work strongly to implement these at local, national and international levels. We will aim to reduce energy use by 33% by 2020 and 66% by 2050.

We oppose shale gas fracking in Sheffield and elsewhere because it is expensive and causes environmental damage. Greenhouse gas reduction requires that most fossil fuels should be left in the ground, not burned.

We will invest in water conservation and flood defences to shield us from extreme weather events.

We will introduce a Nature and Wellbeing Act, as proposed by the RSPB and Wildlife Trusts, to ensure better decision making about conservation, that the environmental consequences of new legislation are taken into account, and that local planning promotes networks of high quality green space, for people and wildlife.

Green Councillors got a commitment from the Labour administration to produce an anti-fracking policy.

Jillian Creasy has been part of the Waterways Strategy Group and Resilient Communities Pilot Project, looking at flood defences and the River Don as a local amenity in Kelham Island.

THE COMMON GOOD

A vote for the Green Party is a vote **for the Common Good**.



Green Party
for the common good

If you would like to know more about Sheffield Green Party then please get in touch:
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