

## Foreword

*The Green Party believes in equality of opportunity, a prosperous and strong local economy, effective public services, community participation, and respect for our environment.*

On Thursday 4 May 2017 you will have the opportunity to vote for Green Party Councillors to represent you on the Devon County Council. The Green Party is putting up more candidates than ever before across Devon.

This manifesto provides a set of distinctive and deliverable policies that elected Green Councillors will work hard to implement. The Green Party is the only Party that can offer the bold yet necessary solutions to the many social, economic and environmental challenges facing us.

Our manifesto is guided by our commitment to social and environmental justice. We believe in equality, a prosperous and resilient local economy and active community participation.

In order to help resolve the challenges that our County will be facing, we believe that creative and innovative solutions should be sought from the whole of our community not just from a governing or financially powerful elite. The best local councillors provide a voice for their communities when they don't have to follow what their political party tells them and Green Party Councillors have Green Party principles and independent minds. These principles include looking after our planet because we only have the one; looking after our public services because they matter to local communities; looking after our economy so that it works for everyone.

## Decision making and Local democracy

The Green Party believes the highest form of democracy is direct participation. All the major political decisions which affect our lives should ideally be made with our active participation. This requires open and informed debate. We believe people should be able to contribute ideas and evidence that lead to policies and decisions which best serve society, the environment and broad democratic interests. Freedom of information and openness of government and its procedures are vital to accountability and the creation of a more democratic society.

The Green Party also believes passionately in electoral reform. We will continue to call for a more democratic electoral system for national and local government. We support the Additional Member System (AMS) where electors vote both for the party of choice and for their councillor(s). This would mean some council seats being allocated according to the overall proportion of votes cast. The Green Party supports returning to a committee system of local government because we believe single party cabinets take decision-making powers away from whole councils by placing them in the hands of a few individuals.

### Did you know that:

The Government's 'Heart of the South West Devolution' proposals could create a large combined authority. Various options have been put forward including one in which Devon, Somerset and the unitary authorities of Plymouth and Torbay join forces and are given administrative control of health, social care, transport, education and other important public services, through new bodies called Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs).

To date there has been no public consultation on these plans and devolution deals have been negotiated behind closed doors with almost zero public involvement.

Local Enterprise Partnerships are made up of unelected, appointed boards of membership, and money that would have gone to councils could be redirected to this Quango to distribute. It is not clear that the LEPs are representative of the diversity of small and medium sized businesses that are the bedrock of Devon's businesses.

We are concerned that these 'super authorities' offer privileged access and funds to big business, with little accountability and that the 'big idea' to fire up local economies is fuelled by financial profit for the few, rather than social wellbeing for the many, or any concern for the environment. The proposals will transfer resources and powers away from elected County Councils to unelected authorities, thus limiting transparency and the degree to which their decisions and activities can be monitored.

The Green Party believes that we must devolve power and decision-making to the most local level practicable, but that the Government's proposals represent a perverse use of the word 'devolution' in order to gain political acceptability.

### **Green County Councillors will:**

- Fight for people to have a real say over important local issues such as planning, housing and the local economy, helping them feel empowered and with a real stake in their communities.
- Resist attempts to weaken democratic accountability in local decision-making through the implementation of these proposals and fight for transparency, consultation and democratic choice.
- Resist attempts to impose the centrally driven dismantling of local democracy under the guise of 'devolution' rhetoric.
- Democratised English sub-regional devolution arrangements and reform local government finance, so as to provide for effective decentralisation of power.
- Seek to reintroduce a committee system of local government, to provide for direct member involvement in decision-making.
- Offer local people a greater say in designing, delivering and monitoring local services, by giving them power to set up local neighbourhood councils with devolved community budgets and decision-making powers.
- Better publicise existing Devon County Council 'Listening to you' processes such as surveys, consultations and on-line polls, to provide feedback to councillors and officers.
- Deliver fully open and transparent government, ensuring council records and information are easily available.
- Ensure open access to information on all public and private organisations performing public functions and/or operating with public funds.
- Encourage cross-party cooperation and oppose a system of whipping councillors into line; Green Party Councillors will call upon other parties to support this.
- Continue to push for electoral reform at national and local level.

### **Economic stability**

The pursuit of endless growth has led to cycles of boom and bust, and a consumer and debt culture which has greatly contributed to today's economic and ecological crises. Brexit throws up many challenges and risks but also opportunities, which the Green Party is taking on board by offering positive and practical solutions.

The Green Party challenges assumptions about economic growth. Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is a poor and narrow indicator of true progress and does not adequately measure people's sense of well-being. We believe that we should be striving for fairness, equality, security and sustainability rather than endlessly chasing growth for the benefit of the few.

Brexit saw a rejection of politicians who have failed to challenge corporate power or the negative consequences of globalisation. The Green approach to Brexit offers a vision of hope for the world and is made in the light of our own longstanding critique of global corporatism.

Globalisation has brought much good in its wake. It has enabled people to feel like genuine global citizens, but Greens have consistently argued for greater self-reliance and stronger local economies and feel that such a path will be the best future on offer for the UK outside the EU. Green proposals aim to build resilience in local, regional and national economies through deliberately boosting increased self-sufficiency while reducing dependency on exports. This would reduce vulnerability in an increasingly unstable world economy. It is also a challenge to the power of multinational corporations over our economy and people's lives. This emphasis would seek to reduce transport costs, with their associated carbon emissions, while maintaining high environmental standards. Greens feel that all other models of trade – such as falling back on World Trade Organisation rules or new trade deals outside the single market – would lead to a worsening economy and threaten environmental standards and workers' rights.

Devon has the natural, technological and human resources to bring about a renewable energy revolution. It should not miss out through lack of political vision and investment. A commitment to renewable energy technology would not only achieve local self sufficiency in affordable energy but it could turn Devon into a centre for exporting the technology, engineering design and component manufacture, which would transform the area. This would create skilled, long-term, quality jobs that would keep our young people in the area and underpin a thriving local economy.

The preservation and protection of Devon's environmental quality, diversity and beauty is key to the success and sustainability of the County's tourist industry. In 2013 the Marine Conservation Society's Good Beach Guide placed some of the beaches in Devon on the critical list for failing to meet the minimum standards, as storm water became mixed with sewage. The EU's stricter Bathing Water Directive came into effect in 2015 but the environment doesn't feature in the Government's 12 point plan on Brexit, and there are voices that speak of weakening environmental regulations, dismissing them as red tape.

Jobs in Devon need to provide opportunities and levels of pay which enhance quality of life and in turn increase productivity and profitability for local businesses and enterprises. A Living Wage will help young people to afford local homes and stay in the County to develop their careers; a strong local economy will encourage local investment to utilise the County's natural environmental assets. We believe a resilient economy is built on locally based activity, by locally owned and run enterprises, engaged in local trading of goods and services. The Green Party believes in systems that support a circular economy, where income, goods and services generated within the local community stay within it instead of being sucked away by multinational corporations.

### **Did you know that in Devon:**

84% of businesses are small, employing less than 10 people; over a quarter are not registered to pay VAT.

Many young people aged 20-24 leave to live in other places to find jobs.

Key workers can be and are priced out of the market because of the popularity of retirement and second homes.

Average wages are lower than the UK average; there are large differences in earnings between the best and worst off areas in Devon.

We have nearly six million visitors per year; hotels and catering make up 7% of the economy, twice the national average.

In London, an independent study of the business benefits of implementing a Living Wage policy found that more than 80% of employers believe that the Living Wage has led to improved performance of their staff, while absenteeism has fallen by approximately 25%.

### **Green Councillors will:**

- Press for investment in renewable energy and support the growth of innovation in manufacturing, knowledge-based and renewable-energy-generating sectors. They believe that fossil fuels and nuclear are a distraction from this clear path. They will prioritise the creation of more quality jobs through re-skilling or learning new skills and provide job security in low carbon industries of the future, well suited to Devon, including recycling, eco-housing, local tourism, organic farming, local food, and manufacturing and knowledge-based industries.
- Boost the number of places for skills training in economic sectors where production can substitute for imports, and press for short term government subsidies to develop local sectors where such substitution could happen, whether in infant industries or in reviving and renewing older sectors.
- Support continued UK cooperation with the EU and its member states on issues such as fisheries and marine conservation, air pollution, chemicals, climate change and environmental science research, issues that have implications for the local Devon economy.
- Support increased possibilities for local small businesses, co-operatives, and social enterprise. Shift tax-breaks, subsidies and public expenditure on infrastructure away from unfairly favoured large and global companies, and redirect them to help build up the local economy.
- Uphold the basic principle of locality and region providing for their own needs where possible from their own resources. This should include the use and re-use of materials, encouraging re-manufacturing, less consumption and less waste.
- Link banking directly to local and regional economies rather than to the international finance system.
- Support genuine democratic devolution to regions and reform to local government finance, to provide effective decentralisation of power as a stepping stone to a more radical agenda of localisation.
- Explore fully the potential for Devon County Council owned farms to be used to generate renewable energies.
- Continue to support a Living Wage for all County Council employees. Work toward obtaining it for under 25-year-olds. Ensure all local businesses meet their legal obligations on paying it.
- Work to increase the minimum wage to the Living Wage of £10 per hour by 2020.
- Prioritise businesses and social enterprises that have no more than a 10:1 pay ratio (highest earner to lowest earner) and can demonstrate their local connections when considering procurement of public sector sub-contracted goods and services.
- Ensure empty industrial units are offered rate-free for a negotiated period to support local start-up enterprises and businesses.
- Ensure that economic regeneration projects and investment include support and space for local businesses and enterprises.
- Lead a Devon-wide Buy Local, Buy Green campaign, to prioritise procurement of local and sustainable produce.

- Develop more permanent market sites and market squares to accommodate and support Farmers' Markets and other local businesses.
- Support Farmers' Markets through improved infrastructure, increased frequency and wider promotion, to help them flourish.
- Seek to develop the inland tourism market, promoting a longer season not dependent on good summer weather.
- Protect the county's tourist industry by pushing for 'Green guarantees' to make sure that environmental regulation remains at least as strong as current EU regulation, and to ensure UK compliance with environmental regulation through an independent court.
- Support the Transition Town movement across the county and publicise their ideas, initiatives and achievements to build more resilient local economies.
- Support Devon's growing Fairtrade Town network; work to ensure Devon retains its Fairtrade County status.

## Public Services: including the NHS, Social Care, Youth Services

The Green Party believes that public and social services are the bedrock of a civilised society. We believe that the drastic cuts being made to public services and their rapid privatisation by the current government are largely ideologically-driven and completely unnecessary.

**The NHS** is being reorganised into corporate and market-place structures that will see integrated **NHS** and **Social Care** services increasingly outsourced and run by large multinational private corporations. Green Party councillors and activists, up and down the country, have been at the forefront of campaigns against cuts and privatisation not only in health but in our workplaces, community and welfare services. Furthermore, the Green Party believes the cuts are not only morally wrong; they are also financially short-sighted. Many public services save more money than they cost by preventing a host of social and health problems. Dismantling our public services is no way to build a fair society or a strong economy.

**Youth Services** have been particularly hard hit by austerity. The Green Party believe provision for young people is a vital contributor to social and mental health and wellbeing. Devon Youth Services has now been contracted out for the next three years to a company described as a not-for-profit Public Sector Mutual, established with the support of the Council. DCC's website says the company is designed to allow the services to be run on more entrepreneurial lines, enabling it to have other sources of funding. Greens are concerned that the service should be properly funded and fully accountable under the local authority to ensure proper monitoring and transparency.

Our vision is to restore and strengthen public and social services. We want to increase the status of working in the public sector, to increase wages and reduce excessive private profit in health and care sectors. We want to see a Devon-wide policy to raise care standards, increase job satisfaction and improve the quality of life of 'cared for' people and those committed to caring for them.

### Did you know that in Devon:

In the Clinical Area covering North East and West Devon more than 1 in 5 people are aged 65 or over – higher than the national average and predicted to rise to 1 in 4 by 2021.

More than 84,000 people (of all ages) act as carers – just over 11% of the population or 1 in 10 people.

Approximately 10.8% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. Below the national average but

some areas in North Devon, Tiverton and Dartmouth are above the national average.

Devon County Council acts as Corporate Parent for approximately 700 children in care.

There were cuts of nearly £1m in 2014 to Youth Services, leaving young people without essential services.

Only eight youth centres remain across the County with 90 job losses and other posts being outsourced.

Sustainability and Transformation Plans (STPs) meted out across the country are presented as template plans to improve services and efficiency in the NHS but they work to a government directive to cut expenditure.

Devon County Council has responsibility for Public Health, Adult Social Care and Children's Services. It jointly commissions Integrated Care Services with the North East and West Devon Clinical Commissioning Group (NEW Devon CCG). Hence it is fundamental that the Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee examine and report back on the proposals of the STP. £11.8m of the Public Health Grant is committed to this contract in 2017/18.

If the STP for Devon is not fully implemented, NEW Devon CCG is predicted to be overspent by £550m by 2020/21. The campaign group Save Our Hospital Services say the NHS in Devon is not overspent but underfunded from the start.

The STP aims to look after recovering patients in their own homes with teams of mobile nursing carers and back-up from clinical 'hubs' replacing in-patient bed services. The CCG says 600 people are in hospital who do not need to be there and would be better off at home but campaigners are deeply concerned that patients will suffer, as social as well as clinical home care will prove insufficient. There have already been multiple inpatient bed closures in community hospitals across the county. NEW Devon CCG aims ultimately to close 72 beds in the Eastern Locality alone; many of these have already been removed.

Campaigners are concerned that the direction of travel of the STP is toward fragmentation and privatisation of services, with an ultimate future aim of health care being means-tested, and insurance premiums, as in an American-style for-profit system, may become the norm. Campaigners predict that if the current government directives prevail, only patients who can pay for adequate care in their own homes will receive it.

Many local GPs have voiced concerns about changes to services. For example, North Devon GP Forum, who wrote an open letter to CEOs at the STP, the CCG, NDHT, Local MPs and the local press voicing concern at potential loss of acute services at North Devon District Hospital [NDDH].

NDDH is the most remote hospital in mainland England. Closure of Acute services at NDDH would mean journey times of over an hour and up to/over 3 hours for some patients. This would inevitably lead to deaths.

### **Green Councillors will:**

- Work to ensure the highest quality services are delivered to all the people of Devon in all their diversity; we seek to provide services that meet the needs of urban and rural communities alike, within an equal-opportunities framework irrespective of age, gender, class, ethnic origin, sexuality, (dis)ability or religious faith.

- Focus on returning services in-house wherever possible, to ensure better quality and value for money.
- Focus on vulnerable people as a priority and ensure that care is based on need.
- Value the views of service users and involve them in consultations about the design and delivery of services.
- Embrace Trade Unions as important partners in forming policy regarding public service delivery and in achieving and maintaining fair pay and conditions for employees within the public services.
- Oppose short-term 'money-saving' measures that cost more in the long term; show how public-service provision can prevent problems such as homelessness, crime and social breakdown.
- Support and invest in the workforce to increase training opportunities and job satisfaction for those doing 'unskilled' jobs and to recognise and celebrate the value of such work.
- Challenge the Sustainability and Transformation Plan directive from NHS England which seeks to cut inpatient beds and services across the whole of Devon.
- Argue strongly for increased lobbying of Westminster for improved funding for Health and Care Services across Devon.
- Argue strongly for lobbying Westminster for improved recruitment, training of – and incentives to retain – clinical professionals.
- Network with other councils across the country regarding challenging STP proposals and regarding campaigning for more transparent and fairer funding and management of Health and Wellbeing.
- Seek to persuade fellow councillors that Health is a universal right and must not be exploited as a commercial opportunity for financial profit.
- Propose alternative directions of travel for integrated health care and public health – especially more joined-up thinking around health and wellbeing and housing, employment, income, transport and education.
- Campaign for increased government funding for Youth Services.
- Commit to improving rather than removing services and facilities for young people.
- Keep a watchful eye on the progress of Youth Services under their new administration.

## Education

Although education should be considered a lifelong possibility, it is recognised as fundamental for children and young people up to the age of 18 and one of the most important responsibilities of Local Authorities.

The Green Party believes that education should provide everyone with the knowledge and full range of skills they require to participate fully in society and lead a fulfilled life.

Education is a right and entitlement and should be free at the point of delivery. We oppose any attempt to privatise state-funded schools or to enable them to become profit-making.

We believe in a child-centred approach to learning, which builds on the skills and interests of each individual child and nurtures a desire to learn throughout life. We believe that education should promote equality, inclusivity, social and emotional well-being and responsibility.

Greens also believe that education should be at the heart of communities and be democratically accountable to them.

### Did you know:

Under the Government's 'Fairer Funding Formula' many Devon schools are now losing out. Devon's schools are funded at £290 less per pupil than the national average. The funding formula consultation (2016) would benefit 212 schools in Devon –from nursery to secondary – but 129 would be worse off. Pupils would still be funded at £268 per head less than the national average.

Devon County Council has also voted to cut school budgets by £2.2 million: they say that they have to raid the budget for schools to pay for the deficit the Council faces for the budget for Special Needs.

In the face of these crippling cuts, schools have been contacting parents asking them to write to their MPs expressing concern about the worrying implications for their children's education. However, many Devon MPs are of the party that has endorsed the funding formula. While Conservative MPs and Councillors are keen to be seen to criticise the Government's plans in the face of local pressure from schools and parents, they prefer to focus on the difference between regions and having to meet budget choice between service groups, thus diverting attention away from the fact that overall education funding looks set to experience cuts nationally for years to come.

Schools will be forced to compensate loss of finance by losing teachers or support staff and increasing class sizes. Some could be forced to close.-Rather than placing high quality education for all as a priority, the Government seem bent on creating a new generation of grammar schools, which most serious research indicates will only benefit a few.

### Green Councillors will:

- Oppose the Conservative Government's ill conceived Funding Formula. We will fight against overall cuts to education budgets but will support policies to improve the quality of education for all, not the few.
- Support education in mixed ability environments, as evidence shows that the overall standard of achievement will be higher.
- Maintain the key role of Local Authorities in: the planning and provision of new school places; the establishment of fair admissions policies; the ensuring of equality of access for Looked After Children and those with disabilities and special needs; and the provision of School Support Services. We will seek to strengthen Local Authorities through adequate funding and to enhance their local democratic accountability.
- Push to integrate Free Schools and Academies under the Local Authority so that they can work together to achieve quality education for all; although publicly funded, they currently lack local democratic accountability and oversight.
- Oppose the current testing regimes, rigid age related benchmarking and the narrow focus of the curriculum. This has led to 'teaching to the test' at the cost of broader and creative education which pupils both need and deserve.
- Support the principle that teachers in state funded education should be employed through local authorities and have QTS (Qualified Teacher Status).
- Fight for education infrastructure and funding to be in place to properly meet communities' needs in areas of Devon that are subject to strategic development plans involving housing development and growing population.

## Energy and climate change

Climate change is one of the greatest challenges facing society and we all play a part in it through the energy and fuel we use in our daily lives. Reducing the amount of energy we use and using it more efficiently is the most cost effective way to help reduce the impacts of climate change.

Devon has huge potential to generate energy from renewable sources such as the wind, sun, tidal power and waste food/wood. Fully supporting and enabling the growth of renewable energy industries and ending fuel poverty are key commitments for the Green Parties in the county.

Generating our energy from renewable sources would significantly reduce the county's contribution to climate change and also reduce the need for nuclear power stations and exploration into environmentally damaging energy sources, such as shale gas – both of which the Devon Green Parties fundamentally oppose.

Within Devon the challenge to help people save energy lies in the rural nature of the county, the number of old buildings and the lack of access to the mains gas network. These factors also result in many of our residents struggling to keep their homes warm and living in fuel poverty. This can have serious consequences for health and well-being and is a public health priority in the county. Renewable energy also offers the opportunities for giving power back to communities through small scale, community- owned projects.

### Did you know that in Devon:

1 in 4 households is classed as fuel poor (struggling to keep warm) and could benefit from help to make their homes more energy efficient and to maximise their incomes.

If, through energy efficiency, we reduced our demand by 40% Devon could produce almost 100% of its energy needs from renewables, with off-shore wind being the greatest untapped resource.

There are higher CO2 emissions from domestic, road transport and land use sectors than in any other county or unitary authority in the South West.

Devon County Council spent over £15 million in 2015/16 on energy, with the majority of this money leaving the county to multinational corporations.

### Green Councillors will:

- Prioritise the development and use of renewable energy technologies and oppose nuclear and fossil fuel based energy generation.
- Prioritise community owned small renewable energy programmes but support large scale projects where appropriate, e.g. tidal stream, wave energy and offshore wind technologies in the Bristol Channel.
- Challenge business rates on solar installations on schools and other public service buildings. These hikes in taxes are punishing those who have already installed and will discourage more in the future.
- Unless already instigated, require all council-owned properties to carry out a Green Energy Audit, identifying potential for energy efficiency and generation, and to act upon recommendations.

- Review annual carbon budgets for council services and report on these alongside the financial budget each year to ensure ambitious carbon reduction targets are met.
- Ensure that 100% of electricity used in DCC offices is sourced from renewables by 2020.
- Establish in-house training for all Councillors and appropriate officers on renewable energy technologies and their economic benefits to Devon communities.
- Maintain the county-wide energy efficiency and insulation programme, targeting residents living in fuel poverty as a priority.
- Explore ways to enable rural communities to move away from dependency on heating oil.
- Refuse all applications for shale-gas extraction (fracking) and oppose it in neighbouring authorities.
- Ensure the County's transport infrastructure is safeguarded against the effects of climate change.
- Work with others to deliver an integrated education and media campaign to keep climate change at the forefront of people's minds; encourage behavioural change across all sections of the community and emphasise financial savings from such changes.

## Farming, Fisheries and Food

### Farming

Devon's vital farming industry sits at the heart of the community in most parts of the county. The rural economy is an essential part of our culture and heritage and shapes our physical landscape. As DCC owns many farms across the county which are let to farmers it has a direct as well as indirect interest in their management and success.

#### Did you know:

Devon has more dairy cows than any other county, and is also a big producer of beef, sheep, poultry, swedes, apples, and grain. Devon has some of the best and most innovative farm businesses in Britain, with particularly strong organic vegetable growers, cheese makers, and swede packers. If the government takes us out of the European Single Market, Devon's farming will face a crisis. We are dependent on exports to the EU, which may face tariffs, and we will struggle to remain viable in competition with cheap (low tariff) imports from further afield. With the removal of the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) blanket, the UK will need a set of policies that help our farming, countryside and rural communities adjust fast to address these challenges, in everyone's interest.

The Government's commitment to maintain the current levels of subsidies will end in 2020. Greens would press to maintain the equivalent level of annual farm payment. However, the CAP budget pays landowners simply for the area they farm and Greens believe that public money should be targeted at farms that protect natural resources and provide public benefits like ecological services, social benefits, and employment, but also access to the countryside and opportunities for leisure and tourism. Whilst EU schemes have sometimes seemed inappropriate for our own local farms, new replacement schemes should be tailor-made to get the best out of our countryside.

In the UK, we lose an estimated 2.2 million tonnes of topsoil each year. The depletion of soil nutrients results in lower yields for farmers, sometimes driving higher fertiliser use, which in turn encourages further soil degradation.

There has been an overall decline in wildlife species of 56% since 1970.

The County Council has a role to play in encouraging local food producers, through public procurement. The Food For Life scheme increases the uptake of fresh local produce, especially vegetables, in schools and hospitals.

### Green Councillors will:

- Take a joined-up approach that looks at land in the round – farming, forestry, water, wilderness.
- Seek to maintain and develop our farming heritage and ensure that sustainable and ethical farming practices are at the heart of Devon County Council owned farms; support farm management as a real career opportunity.
- Campaign for policies to help farmers and growers move towards sustainable business models. This would include enhanced regulation of environmental, health, safety and product standards. This would particularly apply to animal welfare and soil health.
- Campaign for clean water and flood protection - Our degraded soils are unable to retain water effectively, increasing the risk of flooding. Slurries and agrochemicals – like fertilisers and pesticides – run off farmland to pollute streams and rivers.
- Champion wildlife and biodiversity, including the protection of local habitats (such as woodlands and hedgerows).
- Propose renewed focus on supply chains to improve resilience, farmers' incomes, and environmental sustainability.
- Focus on food security - food waste is unacceptably combined with food poverty.
- Focus on public health - farming, food and public health are intimately linked. Poor diet drives ill-health. Contaminated animal feed and antibiotics are passed on through the food chain and have contributed to human disease and antibiotic resistance.
- Enable and encourage public participation in debate and decisions on the future of farming.
- Ensure that our farming and food system works to mitigate and adapt to the realities of climate change.

### Fisheries

As with Farming, decades of industrial exploitation and mismanagement have led to huge environmental problems. These include massive ocean acidification and pollution. Globally, we are overfishing our oceans. Most commercial fish stocks worldwide are fully- or over- exploited, and almost all of the top ocean predators are very severely depleted. Fisheries have experienced spectacular collapses, for example cod off Newfoundland, Canada, in 1992, leading to the loss of some 40,000 jobs.

Indiscriminate practices have led to marine mammals, birds, corals, and numerous “non-target” species and juveniles being destroyed. Until very recently, in many fisheries over half of the catch was thrown back dead, because it was not target species, below minimum landing size, or over quota; while quotas themselves ignored historic evidence and scientific advice on sustainability.

Working cooperatively with other EU countries gave hope for progress on protection but Brexit may change that.

Small-scale, low-impact fishing fleets and communities with fishing heritage have the potential to deliver significant cultural, environmental and economic benefits to the UK, but current arrangements make it very difficult for fishermen to make a living. A move away from large

industrialised fishing practices to smaller, locally-based fisheries would not only be environmentally beneficial but also provide a boost to coastal economies.

### Did you know:

The EU's Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) was deemed to fail local community fisheries such as those on Devon coasts but it has radically improved. By June 2016 there was a commitment for fisheries to be sustainable by 2020, and an end to centralised management and discard. The 2016 EU negotiations allocated 30 per cent of the EU quota to Britain, the second-largest after Spain, despite the fact that the UK only makes up 13 per cent of the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). Much of the pain of small community fisheries has been inflicted by our own government's backing of industrial fleets, by unfair British quota distribution, to the huge detriment of local, low impact fishers. Now we are leaving Europe the right of foreign vessels to fish in British waters and for British boats to fish in others may be the subject of renegotiation, the outcome of which is highly uncertain – the UK could regain some fishing grounds for quotas but lose others. The Marine Conservation Society believes EU regulation has been very good for marine conservation and is seriously concerned that exiting the EU could affect achieving objectives, because of changes, or loss of EU legislation, around water quality, bathing water and the CFP.

The Devon and Severn Inshore Fisheries and Conservation Authority (D&SIFC) acts to ensure responsible behaviour in the region to maintain sustainable levels of fish and protect the livelihoods of its fishermen.

Shell fishing has been a major part of Devon's fishing industry. Up to 80 local and visiting scallop boats rely on the inshore scallop beds in the Devon and Severn Inshore fishing district for part-income. Severe fines are imposed for breaches to closed seasons – around £13,000 was one sum for dredging off Lundy last summer.

Vessel monitoring systems have been introduced to track and manage responsible fishing but we need more of them. D&SIFC were applying for a grant from the EU for widespread installation in vessels both under and over 12 metres but Brexit may jeopardise this.

In 2012 almost 80% of the UK's fishing fleet was made up of boats less than 10 metres long, but this only accounted for 8% of the total fleet's capacity and a third of its power. However, these smaller boats have been in decline thanks to mismanagement by British government ministers and EU legislation.

In 2015 the environmental charity *Greenpeace* took the British Government to court for giving most of Britain's fishing quota to European mega-vessels, like the Dutch *Cornelius Vrolijk*; this dispensation has favoured huge industrial fleets but been hugely damaging to small sustainable fisheries.

In 2016 the total economic value of salmon rivers in Devon was calculated to be £40.67m

### Green Councillors will:

- Support legislation giving preferential access to the least environmentally destructive operators and the operators contributing the most to coastal communities.
- Challenge legislation enabling or ignoring long-term damage to the marine environment created by higher impact fishing practices, such as the use of heavy mobile gear.
- Support new legislation regarding prohibition of estuarine and river netting. Prohibitions would not only protect salmon, trout, bass and other species but could have a positive

impact on the recreational sector of the economy, benefitting a wide range of people rather than a relatively small group of commercial netters.

- Help fishing communities to gain employment in the management, monitoring and protection of the marine environment, utilising their experience and diversifying income streams so as not to be solely reliant on catches to make a living.
- Encourage the promotion of local seafood products over those from elsewhere and support developing home markets for a more diverse range of fish from UK waters. This would include better labelling for marine products to allow more informed consumer choice regarding sustainability and point of origin.
- Support legislation to improve the condition of both fresh and salt water.
- Campaign for greater surveillance and enforcement of legislation regarding damage to the marine environment around all of Devon's coastal waters – increase in such damage would ultimately lead to a decline in stocks and therefore the wellbeing of the fishing community and economy.

## Planning and Housing

Devon is the third largest county in England with a population of 1.1 million. It is largely rural with the majority of the population focused in a few urban areas, the largest being Exeter with a population in 2015 of 127,300. The remaining population lives in scattered rural communities.

The Green Party seeks planning solutions which will help Devon maximise its natural and human resources while preserving and enhancing the environment. We seek to involve local people in planning decisions.

Our rural heritage and national parks necessitate a particular approach to ensure we balance the needs of the thousands who visit Devon annually while maintaining flourishing rural communities for those who live and work here. We want to see thriving economies in our high streets; support systems for Devon's large and important farming community and help for local and cottage businesses and enterprises. Planning also needs to support the region's growing renewable energy-generating, manufacturing and knowledge-based sectors.

At the same time we need to acknowledge that much existing housing stock for rent is overpriced, even in places where many houses are empty. Government policy encouraging the use of housing as a speculative form of investment, rather than a basic requirement, has allowed extortionate rents and evictions rather than the maintenance of decent living standards in rented properties. This has led to homelessness and increased health and social problems.

The Green Party will support a strategic planning framework that encourages the use of local resources wherever practicable; prioritises locally based businesses and enterprises and increases training and apprenticeship opportunities. This sustainable approach will ensure a flourishing economy, reduce the need for long commutes, maintain a young labour force in the County and keep our heritage intact.

*Please note:* Most planning decisions are made at District Council level. Devon County Council is responsible for planning at a strategic level such as Devon-wide structural plans and planning applications for mineral extraction, waste management or transport plans together with planning applications for the County Council's own development such as schools and libraries. Waste and transport are treated in separate areas of this manifesto.

**Did you know:**

Around 95,000 people in Devon live in wards ranked among the 25% most disadvantaged in the country.

It has been reported that by 2020, first time buyers, on average, across the country, will need a salary of £64,000 per year in order to afford a property. Rental cost for decent and adequate sized rental accommodation is exceeding average salary.

54% of the natural landscape in Devon is subject to special protection or designation.

Teignbridge and East Devon are pilot authorities chosen by the government for its Brownfield Register. The Register is intended to help house-builders to identify sites quickly to speed up construction but at the same time government has cut funding for 'remediation' of (removal of toxic materials from) brownfield to make it suitable for development. Only 50% of new dwellings were on previously developed land (2006-2009)

There is a risk of flooding in populated areas including: Lynmouth, Exmouth, Exeter, Bideford, Newton Abbott, Shaldon and Ringmore.

### **Green Councillors will:**

- Consider the long-term rather than purely the short- to medium- term impacts of planning decisions; all decisions will be based on long-term forecasting for future generations.
- Despite the fact that it was an EU directive, Greens will continue to promote the use of the Strategic Environmental Assessment\* in all planning strategy at local and regional levels.
- Challenge the growth forecasts outlined in the Regional Development Framework and Spatial Strategy, particularly relating to large scale housing developments.
- Press for local communities to have a stronger voice in strategic housing plans and seek to break the stranglehold that a small number of large developers have over housing provision and development. This will include challenging regulations governing land tax, to discourage development based on financial profit rather than social need.
- Ensure that strategic housing policy will be fully integrated with other policies to build more sustainable, self reliant communities. The provision of housing should be coordinated with developments to provide work, leisure, education, transport and health care.
- Drive to provide more affordable housing by encouraging the reuse of empty buildings and building new homes using income generated from taxing second, holiday homes.
- Minimise development on greenfield sites wherever possible, by re-using previously developed sites which have fallen into disuse and prioritise social needs at strategic planning level when considering brownfield land use (e.g. prioritise social/affordable housing over supermarkets).
- Ensure flood risk assessments take into account both adaptation to and mitigation of climate change.
- Prioritise water conservation and management by ensuring protection from deterioration in the quality, quantity or natural flow of underground, surface and coastal waters.
- Ensure all new developments incorporate collection and reuse of water schemes and assess the feasibility of a sustainable water supply in areas selected for potential significant growth.
- Promote the use of wetland, natural and constructed, in water quality and flood management.
- Promote technical and management solutions with planning applications, to reduce carbon emissions to as near carbon-neutral as possible.
- Promote use of environmentally sustainable building practices above and beyond current national standards in both new build and existing structures.

- Review Devon’s Minerals Core Strategy Survey process to provide clearer guidelines and more thorough community evaluation procedure.
- Support Transition Groups, which can help to ameliorate the effects of local council cuts in relation to the loss of green spaces and the lack of community development. They can contribute to Neighbourhood Plans and focus attention on adverse planning proposals.
- Support the *Renters Charter* developed by the Young Greens. Young people disproportionately face many problems renting. The measures contained in the Charter would help empower young people and students so they not only have better places to live and a better quality of life, but are emboldened to challenge injustices in the system where and when these arise. It involves:
  - Being tough on developers to ensure new developments are affordable, accessible and integrated into the community, with high environmental standards.
  - A version of the Empty Homes Scheme aimed at private student properties - requiring private developments to be more open about occupancy rates.
  - Renter’s Union between renters and community groups and supported by the council, to discuss issues and give advice.
  - Developing a database for rented properties, with in-house accreditation for accessibility, environmental standards, affordability and community impact.
  - Working together with local authorities to share best practice on tackling large developers and seek an end to the exploitation of young people in the rental sector through high rents, poor living conditions and hefty up-front fees.
  - Setting up working groups between universities and their townspeople to develop a full plan on integrating the student population into the wider population of a city.
  - Outreaching into sixth form colleges, schools and universities to discuss what support councils can provide for first time renters and what legal rights young people would have going into renting.
  - Campaigning to encourage modernisation of rented properties for higher living standards, through the development of a seed fund.
  - Adopting a ‘Housing First’-type strategy (already successfully piloted), where residents in vulnerable situations are given permanent accommodation straight away.

\*The Strategic Environmental Assessment evaluates, then changes or mitigates existing objectives to more sustainable and ecologically benign projects. It considers cumulative effects of planning proposals to determine potential build-up of pollutants, noise, space crowding, fragmentation of habitat and other issues over time, and provides a more inclusive, and options-led scoping of plans to mitigate likely impacts, as part of regional planning and land use. In general these effects are not currently dealt with effectively in environmental impact assessments because of limitation of scope.

## Transport

We need to create a transport network in Devon that is integrated, affordable, safe and accessible for all. To achieve this we need to manage demand and ensure transport planning is based on a hierarchy of modes of transport with walking and disabled access at the top, followed by cycling, public transport, rail and water-borne freight, then light-goods vehicles, taxis and low-powered motor cycles and finally private cars and heavy-goods vehicles at the bottom.

We believe that by adopting the 'polluter pays' principle and implementing charges and levies on the most polluting forms of transport, we can decrease traffic levels, reduce health damaging levels of air pollution, particularly in urban areas, and help fund sustainable transport solutions. Investment needs to move away from road building and road widening schemes towards transport that is environmentally sustainable and increases physical activity. We will place high priority on increasing the safety, convenience and comfort of walking and cycling and on funding improvements to public transport.

### **Did you know:**

At least a third of carbon emissions in Devon are attributed to road transport.

Traffic is the region's most significant contributor to air pollution which has serious effects on human health.

Between 2013 and 2030, the total cumulative cost of congestion to the UK economy is estimated to be £307 billion.

Lack of adequate public transport means Devon is highly dependent on private transport, particularly in rural areas, with 83% of households owning at least one car, resulting in isolation for those who do not have access to cars.

Road traffic collisions are a significant contributor to premature deaths in the region, particularly of young people; around half of road deaths in the South West are of people under 30.

Road danger is a strong disincentive to walk and cycle and therefore can indirectly contribute to rising levels of obesity.

Busy and fast roads sever communities; the physical presence of motor traffic, as well as the risk of crashes and injuries, present barriers to interpersonal networks and social contact.

### **Green Councillors will:**

- Introduce area-specific traffic reduction targets, with the highest targets for urban areas suffering severe congestion and air pollution; set a Devon-wide target to reduce motorised traffic levels by 10% by 2020, based on 2010 levels.
- Ensure a 'hierarchy of modes' test is applied when allocating funding to proposed transport projects and developments and prioritise the funding of electric- over petrol- and diesel-fuelled transport projects.
- Incentivise the acquisition and use of electric vehicles by widely expanding access to electric refuelling points.
- Oppose and reverse all plans for new road building and road widening schemes where possible, investing money in sustainable transport solutions instead.
- Introduce a Workplace Parking Levy (WPL) on all large employers in major urban areas, to secure funding for green sustainable transport, including subsidised rural bus services, car clubs in all cities and towns and initiatives proposed by businesses in Devon to reduce car journeys to work.
- Plan for an extensive and expansive Devon Metro project with high quality rolling stock, high frequency services, full integration of bus services, and the reopening of old railway lines and stations.
- Introduce through-ticketing to cover journeys on more than one mode of transport; speed up the introduction of smart-card ticketing.

- Ensure greater provision for bicycle spaces on trains and at stations and introduce/reintroduce carriage of bicycles on certain bus routes across the County, beginning with DCC supported services.
- Establish secure and covered 'cycle park & ride' sites at major bus interchanges/ junctions.
- Work with a network of sustainable transport bodies to improve infrastructure and facilities for walking, cycling and public transport across the county.
- Oppose any further expansion of regional airports and increase in flights; promote lower-impact transport options for tourism and trade and show how these can benefit the local economy.
- Push for the expansion of the rail freight network across Devon and investigate potential for greater use of waterways freight.
- Ensure transport considerations are integral to all new housing, business or industrial developments; ensure that anyone could live or work happily in such a development without a car.
- Push for all housing developments within urban areas to include a proportion of car-free housing, while at the same time ensuring high quality and secure cycling facilities, reliable and frequent public transport and easy access to a car club.
- Use supplementary planning guidance to ensure developers fully fund sustainable transport infrastructure and facilities and that these are established before the completion of the development.
- Work with District Councils to encourage reduced taxi-licensing fees for electric or hybrid vehicles, but increased fees for non-electric/hybrid vehicles.
- Make 20mph the default speed on residential streets across Devon; create 'Home Zones' in all new developments.
- Open dialogue with school pupils and college students to involve them in planning safe routes and safe journeys to school.
- Establish a Devon-wide transport forum for input by the public and existing public transport users groups to get a grass roots picture of needs and issues.

## Waste as a resource

The Green Party believes in a waste hierarchy that places waste reduction at the top, followed by reuse and then recycling. However, it may take some years to reach the ultimate goal of zero waste through this hierarchy. In the meantime, waste is no longer a problem that needs solving by environmentally destructive landfill or incineration. Our waste can now be dealt with in an environmentally safe manner, be a source of revenue and provide energy.

Our waste often contains many valuable materials that can be reused and/or sold commercially for profit. Extracting resources from waste is more accessible, cheaper and less environmentally damaging than the use of virgin resources.

The Green Party is pushing for Zero to Landfill treatment technologies that help us move toward nil landfill or incineration, such as fully automated Material Recycling Facilities (MRF), Plasma Gasification (PG) which safely converts waste to gas, electricity and building materials and Anaerobic Digestion (AD) which converts organic waste into gas, which can be pumped directly into the national grid, and soil conditioner.

A combination of energy from PG and AD and other abundant renewable sources in Devon could enable the County to be self-sufficient in energy within a reasonably short time. This could eliminate

the need for nuclear power stations and exploration into environmentally damaging energy sources such as shale gas (fracking) both of which the Green Party fundamentally opposes.

### **Did you know that in Devon:**

In 2015/16 all localities averaged a household recycling, reuse or composting rate of 45.2%. The highest rate across all English authorities was 66.6% the lowest 14.7%. With more time and care by householders as well as commercial and local authority waste management we could recycle 70%.

In 2015/16 an average 445 kg of waste was produced per household.

Incineration produces toxic ash which must be landfilled in special sites.

DCC spent £346.5m on the Exeter Incinerator and guarantees to pay for 60,000 tonnes of waste per year to be burned in it but even if all the waste is not provided DCC still has to pay – over £6m per year for the next 30 years.

Technologies such as Plasma Gasification and Anaerobic Digestion can be scaled down to work with any town of around 8,000 providing the potential for community owned energy generating sources.

### **Green Councillors will:**

- Work with Sustainable Waste Management and Resource Recovery systems that deal with all wastes during a period of transition from a fossil fuel based economy to a low carbon economy.
- Reverse all further planned incinerators and terminate all incineration contracts where possible; such contracts are costly and provide a financial return to private contractors rather than to Devon County Council and communities in Devon.
- Implement or contract alternative technologies to deal with residual waste, such as Plasma Gasification and Anaerobic Digestion, for the safe, efficient, sustainable conversion of waste into electricity, gas, soil conditioner and building materials.
- Establish models of community ownership of small waste-treatment plants so that local people benefit from the energy generated and gain financial returns.
- Provide incentives to encourage the public and businesses to reduce, reuse, repair and minimise waste.
- Provide staff training and incentive-based targets for all Local Authority waste managers and commercial operatives and staff at recycling and resource recovery sites.
- Engage in public education programmes about the true costs of waste management and the benefits of waste minimisation, materials recovery and alternative technologies.
- Ensure that, wherever practical, waste is transported (other than very short local journeys), by rail, river, canal and sea.
- Work with supermarkets and other retailers and the communities they operate in, to reduce the amount of food waste and unnecessary packaging.

### **Further Reading**

Green Party England&Wales Policy pages <https://policy.greenparty.org.uk>

Molly Scott Cato MEP SW: Energy and Climate Change <http://mollymep.org.uk/2015/04/17/power-to-transform/>Farming Fisheries and Food, Economics, Energy, <http://mollymep.org.uk/publications/reports/>

Devon County Council <https://new.devon.gov.uk/>

