

PROGRAMME FOR

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

MAKE CHANGE



Green Party
for the common good

SPRING 2019

GREEN PARTY PROGRAMME

FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT - SPRING 2019

Across England, communities are suffering. Cuts devastate local services and corporate profit-seeking threatens the environment.

In most cases, councils have chosen to rely on conventional, top-down solutions to address residents' needs arising from these challenges. Libraries close, green spaces vanish, potholes grow and street lights dim.

The local elections in May 2019 are a chance to take a stand, to unleash the power of fresh thinking and communities to make lives better – to vote Green

Green councillors are beholden to no-one apart from the residents they serve. They believe in listening to residents and trusting local people with the power to transform their lives and the places they love.

The Green plan to unleash the power of new thinking and community power will protect and revive our communities, after years of neglect and decline.

A vote for a Green councillor in May is a vote to...

UNLEASH NEW THINKING

The Government's ideological commitment to austerity has seen £50 billion cut from council services since 2010. These cuts – forced through from Westminster – have closed libraries, forced councils to sell public land and laid off the council staff that collect litter, repair roads and care for older people. The cross party Local Government Association estimates that councils face a further shortfall of £8 billion by 2025 with the most basic of services being eroded, decimating our communities.

A vote for the Green Party in May is a vote against such outdated, disastrously imposed establishment thinking. It is a vote for a new, fresh approach.

The Green Party is committed to campaigning to restore the £50 billion of public money taken from councils – having Greens elected to councils will send a strong message to Westminster that people have had enough of losing cherished local services.

At a local level, having Greens on your council means having champions for investment in local

services, fighting to improve public spaces, increase access to social housing and to provide more walking, cycling and public transport opportunities.

It means having councillors looking beyond the tired stock answers and convention-sapped ambitions of the establishment parties. Green councillors embrace the new and relish the bold; harnessing resident's skills and trusting local knowledge to solve local challenges, from declining high streets to under resourced public transport.

Unlike councillors from the establishment parties, Greens are not subject to a Party whip that orders them to vote according to the needs of the party machines and their colleagues in Westminster. This means they are free to put the residents they represent front and centre, and to fight without fear of favour for their interests – and the radical solutions that will make their lives better.



GREEN COUNCILLORS IN ACTION SECURING LOWER RENTS IN BRIGHTON

The Green opposition on Brighton & Hove Council has been pushing the controlling Labour group to reduce rents on local council houses, by calculating these rents using local wages – not local house prices. This is radical new thinking, designed to widen access to desperately needed new social housing. Despite the initial opposition of the established parties, real progress is now being made. A new local policy on rents has been secured, and in September 2018 council houses were for the first time offered to local families at lower rents based on local wages. This means that a family with an annual income of £20,000 can now afford to live in a new council house in Brighton.

UNLEASH COMMUNITY POWER

All too often local government decisions feel that they are made a long way away from the communities that will be affected by them. Decisions with huge consequences, from the closing of community centres to the building of thousands of new homes, are made in closed rooms by a handful of people, with limited democratic accountability.

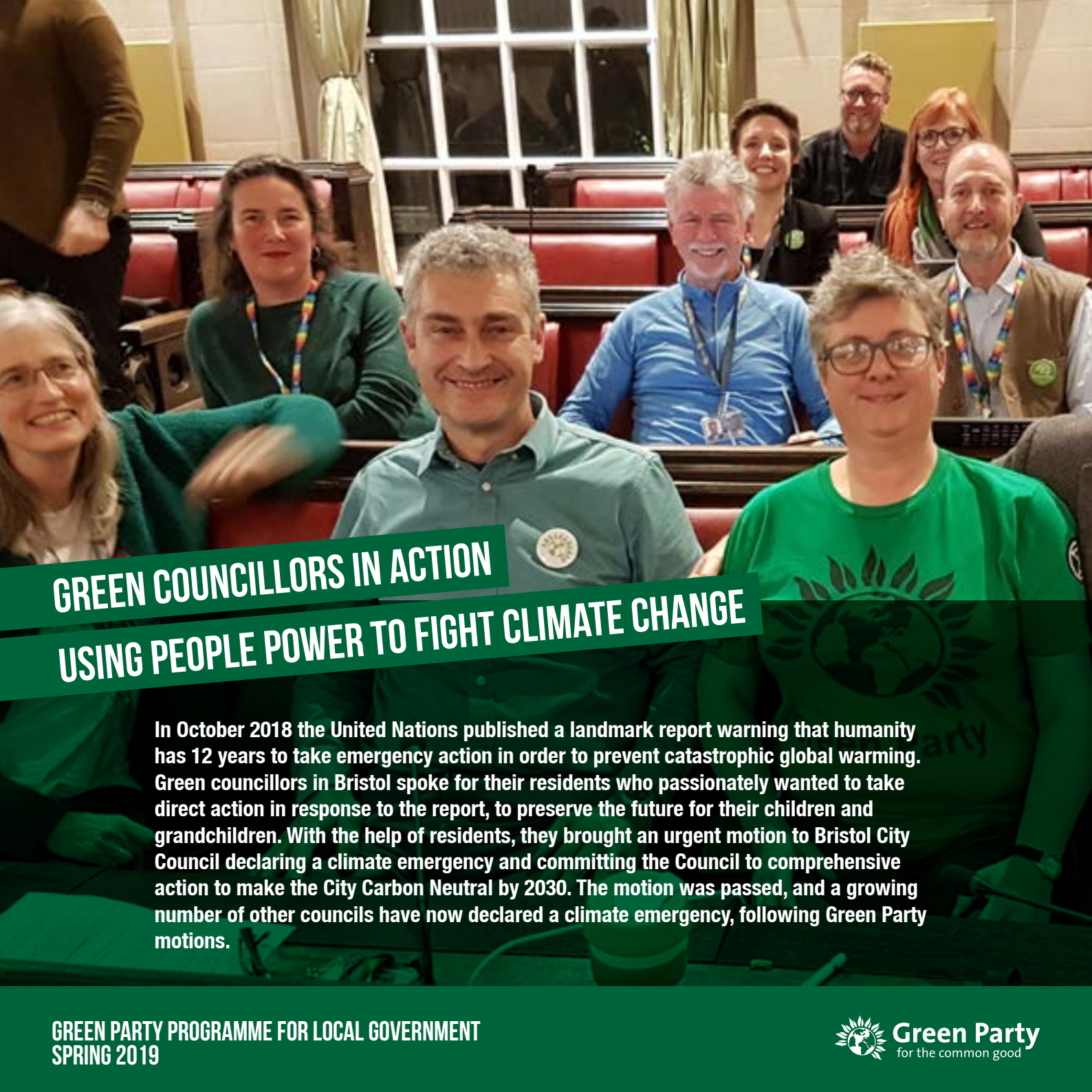
A vote for the Green Party in May is a vote for putting control over decisions that affect our communities firmly in the hands of democratically elected councillors, and the communities they represent. We know that the more democratic participation in our decision making there is, the better those decisions are and local communities will have more influence over those decisions.

The Green Party is committed to taking three practical steps to grow local democracy:

- To require councils to introduce more participatory democracy, allowing residents to form panels and assemblies to directly input into council decision making.

- To end the cabinet system on councils, which gives too much power to a few politicians of one political Party, sitting together in a cabinet that takes all the major decisions affecting an area. We will replace this system with the more democratic committee system, where strategic decisions are taken by all councillors on the council, working together across Party lines.
- To devolve more powers to Parish and Town councillors, and the hard working residents who serve on these community bodies.

More democratic decision making will enable communities to respond directly to the challenges they face, putting power in the hands of the people. As our public services dwindle, our climate breaks down, our green spaces shrink and our wildlife declines we need that power more than ever.



GREEN COUNCILLORS IN ACTION

USING PEOPLE POWER TO FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE

In October 2018 the United Nations published a landmark report warning that humanity has 12 years to take emergency action in order to prevent catastrophic global warming. Green councillors in Bristol spoke for their residents who passionately wanted to take direct action in response to the report, to preserve the future for their children and grandchildren. With the help of residents, they brought an urgent motion to Bristol City Council declaring a climate emergency and committing the Council to comprehensive action to make the City Carbon Neutral by 2030. The motion was passed, and a growing number of other councils have now declared a climate emergency, following Green Party motions.

GREEN CHANGES EVERYTHING

The Green Party offers a unique plan to reinvigorate local government at its time of greatest challenge – to unleash new thinking and community power to make local lives and places better.

When Greens get elected our communities benefit from real change. Electing one more Labour or Conservative councillor doesn't make a difference – Green changes everything. The below outcomes are just a few of the amazing wins elected Greens have secured for their communities over the past twelve months:

MAKING ROADS SAFER

Green councillors in Lambeth successfully introduced a 20mph speed limit on the A23 in an attempt to cut serious injuries and deaths on the road. Across the country green councillors work with their communities on initiatives such as community speedwatch, safer cycle and pedestrian lanes.

PRESERVING GREEN SPACES

A Green councillor led campaign in Sudbury, Suffolk saved precious water meadows from plans to concrete over them for a new road. Across the country Green councillors campaign to save green spaces, ensuring Local Planning policy protects our environment.

SUPPORTING CARE LEAVERS

Solihull Green councillors secured council-wide agreement to exempt young care leavers from having to pay council tax. Across the country Green councillors work with communities to help those who struggle day-to-day with finances.

INCREASING RECYCLING

On Stroud District Council, a Green councillor chairs the Environment Committee and has overseen the Council becoming carbon neutral (first in Europe) and the most improved recycling authority in England, sending the least amount of waste to landfill than any other authority. Across the country Green councillors challenge the status quo to reduce the carbon footprint of councils and bring the climate emergency to the agenda.

BANNING FRACKING

Kirklees Green councillors successfully persuaded the Council to pass motion to only approve fracking applications that could prove they would have net zero carbon emissions impact. Across the country Green councillors join campaigners on the front line to protect the damage to our environment and future generations being done by the policies of the establishment parties.

GROWING LOCAL DEMOCRACY

Green councillors successfully campaigned for Worcester City Council to move from a Cabinet system, where power was concentrated in the hands of one Party, to a Committee system requiring all councillors to work together. Across the country Green councillors campaign to open up decision making and increase community involvement in it.

IMAGINE THE CHANGE GREENS COULD MAKE ON YOUR COUNCIL.

