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Environmental Protection Scotland is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation
SCIO Scottish Charity No. SC 043410



Environmental Protection Scotland

GENERAL ELECTION 2019

EPS ANALYSIS:

WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION?



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Environmental Protection Scotland

Working for a cleaner, quieter, healthier, sustainable Scotland

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INTRODUCTION

VOTERS across the UK go to the polls in the General Election on Thursday December 12th.

The impact of the UK leaving the EU – which is dependent on which party is elected – will have deep implications for the country.

The impact of a withdrawal from EU environmental standards is also important in the overall Brexit debate that is currently being played out.

However, there are a wide range of other issues from air quality to renewables, low carbon initiatives, transport, active travel, green spaces, land ownership, nature and behaviour change which are part of the commitments of the main political parties.

EPS has put together an impartial guide to the environmental-related manifesto pledges of the Conservatives, Labour, Liberal Democrats, SNP, the Green Party and the Brexit Party.

Disclaimer: This guide has been compiled in good faith based on the parties' main UK manifestos. EPS is not responsible for any inadvertent errors or omissions.

CONSERVATIVE PARTY

‘Get Brexit done, unleash Britain’s potential’

HS2 & transport

The Conservative Party, if re-elected, said it would consider the outcome of a review it ordered of HS2 after overall project costs soared to over £81bn.

It would invest in ‘superbus’ networks which would aim to create lower or ‘flat’ fares and increase frequency. It would also increase rural bus services and improve punctuality and there would be investment in e-buses with a promise to create the UK’s first electric bus town.

Clean transport would be supported to ensure clean air. There would be strict new laws aimed at bringing improvements to air quality.

Cycling

A new £350m infrastructure fund would incorporate mandatory design standards for new cycle routes. Every child in the country would receive ‘Bikeability’ training. Cycling would be better promoted as a route to healthier living by the NHS.

Airports

The Conservatives said Heathrow Airport’s plans for a third runway would have to meet air quality and noise obligations, in addition to providing a sound business case. The UK Parliament has voted in principle for the new runway and the party said the proposed scheme would receive no new public money.

The party said new air traffic control technology would reduce the need to lock aircraft in holding patterns as they come into land at airports, delays, noise nuisance and pollution.

The Conservative Party said it would build on the UK’s work to produce electric and low-carbon planes and flights.

Placemaking and low carbon homes

A Conservative Government would support new kinds of homes that produce low energy bills and which support its environmental targets. It wants to see all new streets lined with trees.

The party would pledge to protect and enhance the Green Belt. It would improve poor quality land, increase biodiversity and make the countryside more accessible for local communities to use. This would help provide safeguards for green spaces and brownfield development would be prioritised, particularly for the regeneration of cities and towns.

Environment Bill

The UK Environment Bill currently before Parliament would guarantee the protection and restoration of the natural environment post-Brexit.

New Office for Environmental Protection

A new independent Office For Environmental Protection would introduce Britain’s own legal targets, including for air quality, after it leaves the EU.

Net-zero by 2050

A £640m Nature for Climate fund would be created. There would be a Great Northumberland Forest with plans to plant an additional 75,000 acres of trees within five years and restore peatland.

The party welcomed a review into National Parks by Julian Glover and promised to create new National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Plastics waste

The Conservatives would make producers of packaging pay the full costs for dealing with the waste they produce. Domestic recycling would also be boosted.

Plastic waste exports from the UK to countries which are not members of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) would be banned.

There would be a crackdown on land and sea waste and penalties would be increased for fly-tipping.

Offenders carrying out community-based sentences would be told to clean their parks and streets.

A deposit return scheme would be introduced.

Oil and gas

The Conservatives said the North Sea oil and gas supports almost 300,000 people and has a key role in the transition to a net-zero economy. It promised a sector deal that would transform the industry.

Climate change

It would deliver net-zero Greenhouse Gas Emissions by 2050.

UN Climate Change summit - Glasgow

It will ask the UK's global partners to 'match our ambition' on targets at the COP26 climate change summit in November 2020.

A Conservative Government would set up new international partnerships to tackle deforestation and protect vital landscapes and wildlife corridors.

A £500m Blue Planet Fund would help protect oceans from plastic pollution, warming sea temperatures and overfishing.

Budget

The environment would be prioritised in a Conservative Chancellor's first Budget with a raft of spending commitments from electric vehicle infrastructure to flood defences.

Wind power

A Conservative Government would help deliver two million new high quality jobs in renewables and related industry over the next 10 years.

The offshore wind industry would aim to reach 40GW by 2030 and would see the creation of floating wind farms.

It would invest £800m to build the first fully deployed carbon capture storage cluster by the mid-2020s.

There would be £500m investment to help energy-intensive industries move to low-carbon techniques. Gas for hydrogen schemes would also receive government support.

Hydraulic fracturing (fracking)

There would be an immediate moratorium on fracking in England. It would not support the process unless scientific evidence proved categorically it could be carried out safely.

Energy efficiency in homes

It would help lower energy bills by investing £9.2 billion in the energy efficiency of homes, schools and hospitals.

Ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel cars.

The Conservative Party said it would consult on the earliest date by which the rest of the UK (Scotland already has a 2032 deadline) can phase out sales of new petrol and diesel cars. The current deadline is 2040 in England and Wales.

LABOUR PARTY

‘It’s time for real change’

Economy and energy

A Labour Government would herald the start of a ‘green industrial revolution’ with the creation of one million jobs to transform industry, energy, transport, agriculture and buildings while restoring nature.

It will create a Green New Deal which would promise to achieve a reduction in the substantial majority of UK emissions by 2030 in an evidence-based manner.

It will prioritise sustainability and will take a social justice approach to the green transition that would target the wealthier, most polluting groups in society for the burden of the costs.

Sustainable Investment Board

The Chancellor, Business Secretary and the new governor of the Bank of England would oversee efforts together with the unions and business to mobilise both public and private resources to tackle the climate emergency.

It would ask the Office for Budget Responsibility (OBR) to incorporate climate and environmental impacts into its forecasts, which would help business fully understand the financial costs of their failure to act on climate change.

A £400bn National Transformation Fund would rewrite Treasury investment rules and guarantee all money is compatible with climate and environmental targets. Of this, £250bn would fund a ‘Green Transformation Fund’ dedicated to low carbon energy and renewable policies.

Labour said 100 companies around the world are responsible for most carbon emissions. It would introduce a new criteria for UK Stock Exchange listed firms which would lead to delisting for any firm which failed to contribute to tackling the climate change and environmental emergency.

Renewables

A Labour Government would deliver almost 90% of all of the UK's electricity from renewables; 50% of this would come from heat from renewable/low carbon sources by 2030.

There will be 9,000 new windfarms, 2,000 of which would be onshore and the rest at sea and the creation of enough solar panels to cover 22,000 football pitches.

It pledged to invest further in nuclear power to provide security for the UK's energy provision.

A Labour Government would invest in wind and tidal energy, and provide the funding to ensure the costs of renewable and low carbon hydrogen production are brought down.

All of the UK's 27 million homes would be upgraded to the highest energy efficiency levels, through heat pumps, solar energy and district heating networks. A Labour Government would ensure a zero-carbon 'homes standard' across the board.

It would provide additional capacity for the National Grid through grid enhancements and interconnectors and expansion plans for distributed and community energy.

Hydraulic Fracturing

Fracking would be banned.

Oil and gas industry

The North Sea industry would be targeted by a windfall tax. It would be offset for those employed by the sector and with a strategy to safeguard their livelihoods.

Public ownership of utilities

A Labour Government said one of the benefits of bringing the water and energy utilities back into public ownership, as it plans to do, would help drive a low carbon future and deliver on emissions targets.

Climate apprenticeships

Employers would have to divert 25% of their funds into a levy to help train staff with the skills needed to ensure a clean technology future.

Transport

Labour said cutting emissions is key to its transport strategy and if elected, the new government would review public spending in this sector to ensure it promotes environmental sustainability and low carbon objectives.

Councils will be able to take control and ownership of bus services as it recognises that tickets are too expensive, particularly for disadvantaged and low income groups. It said efforts would also be made to encourage more women to use bus services.

The rail network will be returned to public ownership and a full programme of electrification would take place. Freight will be prioritised over road transport in an effort to cut emissions further.

HS2

Labour pledged that this would be completed to Scotland, with the route taking account of environmental factors for different route options.

The party has promised to ensure streets are designed to give priority for children to play in and take part in healthy activities, such as cycling, and ensure clean air outside schools.

Ban on sale of petrol and diesel cars

It will aim to end the sale of diesel and petrol vehicles by 2030.

Ultra-Low Emission Vehicles

Labour said it will aim to ensure the UK is at the forefront of Ultra Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) sales and manufacturing, with new investment for car-clubs and EV charge-point infrastructure. It will also accelerate the shift towards ULEV vehicles for car fleets and for bus fleets.

Emergency Climate and Environment Bill

Labour said the new Bill would set out binding targets for decarbonisation, nature recovery, environmental quality, habitats and species protection.

Clean Air Act

It would introduce new legislation that included a vehicle scrappage scheme and Clean Air Zones that were compliant with World Health Organisation (WHO) standards for fine particles and NO_x

Flooding

There will be £5.6bn for flood defences, especially in areas of risk.

Tree planting

It would embark on an 'ambitious' programme of tree planting and work with the Environment Agency to improve upstream river management.

National Parks

New National Parks would be created with designated species protection and a wildlife tribunal system would be established.

Land

The party said it would repurpose rural and agricultural structural funds to support sustainable land management practices and community growing.

Food waste

It would aim to achieve net-zero for carbon food production by 2040

Recycling

It would take a leaf out of Wales' successful example (it has become one of the top five countries globally for recycling rates) to ensure producers are responsible for the waste they create and full recycling/disposal costs.

A Labour Government would support a bottle-return scheme.

Animal welfare

A Commissioner would be appointed to oversee a ban on the sale of snares and glue traps in England. Badger culls would be outlined and people would no longer be able to keep primates as pets.

LIBERAL DEMOCRATS

'Stop Brexit. Build a Brighter Future'

Home insulation

The Liberal Democrats say it would be a priority for the new administration to ensure new investment is in place for all of Britain's homes by 2030 to cutting emissions and fuel bills and end fuel poverty.

Renewables

It would ensure that at least 80 per cent of UK electricity is generated from renewables by 2030

Tree planting

It would plant 60 million trees a year to absorb carbon, protect wildlife and improve health.

Public transport

A Liberal Democrat Government would invest in public transport, electrify the railways and ensuring that all new cars are electric by 2030.

Net-zero by 2045

The manifesto sets a new legally binding target to reduce Britain's greenhouse gas emissions to net-zero by 2045 – the same deadline as that set by the Scottish Government

Businesses must comply with Paris Agreement targets

A Liberal Democrat Government would ensure that all businesses that operate in the UK would set consistent environmental targets, and report on their implementation, in line with the Paris Agreement.

Financial services would be regulated to ensure compliance with the Paris Agreement, with new powers for regulators to ensure banks and other providers achieve compliance.

A new Department for Climate Change and Natural Resources would be created with a Cabinet-level Chief Secretary for Sustainability appointed to the Treasury.

UK and local Citizen Climate Assemblies would aim to engage the public to help tackle climate change.

The Liberal Democrats would guarantee that there would be an independent Office for Environmental Protection.

A Liberal Democrat Government would create a new Green Investment Bank and increase funding for Innovate UK and new innovation and technology centres to encourage sustainable farming, land use and carbon dioxide removal.

It would end fossil fuel subsidies and set up a Just Transition Commission to help areas and communities negatively affected by the race to net-zero.

Renewables

It would build more renewable energy sources, remove current restrictions on solar and windfarm building projects, and ensure 80% of the UK's power needs comes from renewable energy by 2030.

It would require all new homes to be built with solar panels and local authorities would receive support for locally sourced electricity generation. They would be built to a zero-carbon standard by 2021, with more ambitious targets by 2025.

Hydraulic fracturing

Fracking would be banned by the Liberal Democrats.

Energy funding

A further £12bn would be provided over the next five years to support renewable or low carbon energy technologies, such as wind and tidal power and hydrogen schemes.

Home energy

It would end fuel poverty by 2025, through cutting fuel bills, and provide free-retrofits to energy systems for people living in low income homes.

Stamp Duty would be levied based on the energy rating of a property.

The country would adopt a zero-carbon heat strategy, with reform of incentives surrounding heat pumps to drive forward their installation. Carbon-capture and storage schemes would be supported.

It would end support for fossil-fuel related activities.

Single-use plastics

The aim would be to completely eliminate all non-recyclable single-use plastics within three years. Plastic waste exports would be ended by 2030.

The Liberal Democrats would introduce legally binding targets for reducing consumption of key natural resources.

A statutory recycling target of 70% would be applied in England, rising to 90% of all homes south of the Border by 2024.

Deposit return schemes would be extended. The Liberal Democrats also pledged to work with the devolved administrations to achieve better consistency with this policy.

Nature

A Nature Act would set legally binding short and long-term targets aimed at improving water, air, soil and biodiversity. It would be backed by at least £18bn of funding over the course of the next Parliament.

Tree planting

A total of 60 million trees a year would be planted.

There would be large scale restoration of peatlands, heathland, native woodlands, saltmarshes, wetlands and coastal waters, helping to absorb carbon, protect against floods, improve water quality and protect habitats.

Food waste

A new national food strategy would cut down on waste.

Open spaces

The Liberal Democrats would create more accessible green space and create a new designation of National Nature Parks.

Flood prevention

It would create a £5bn fund for flood prevention and climate adaptation over the next five years.

DEFRA/Environment Agency

DEFRA and the Environment Agency would receive boosts to their budgets.

Transport

The Liberal Democrats would invest in public transport, buses, trams and railways to enable people to travel more easily while reducing their impact on the environment.

A higher priority would be given to encouraging people to walk and cycle.

Electric vehicles

VAT on the purchase of electric vehicles would be cut to 5% and the ban on the sale of petrol and diesel cars and small vans would be in place by 2030.

Clean Air Act

A new Clean Air Act - one based on stricter World Health Organisation guidelines - would be passed. It would enshrine in law the legal right for people to breathe in unpolluted air, wherever they may live. A new government agency would be set up specifically to tackle poor air quality.

Ultra-Low Emission Zones

Ultra-Low Emission Zones (ULEZ) of the type introduced in London would be extended to 10 more areas across England.

Road haulage

A levy would be imposed on road haulage operators to take account of carbon emissions.

Flights

Taxation would target international flights and the 15% of people who currently take 70% of flights.

A moratorium would be announced on new runways, with any expansion of Heathrow, Stansted or Gatwick airports opposed by a Liberal Democrat Government.

Public transport

Network-wide ticketing would be among the new powers given to local authorities in England to improve transport and light rail and tram-train networks would be supported, where appropriate.

A £4.5 bn programme to restore bus routes and introduce new ones would be introduced.

It would encourage car-sharing, especially for commuters, car-pools and autonomous vehicles for public use through the Local Sustainable Transport Fund.

Rail/HS2

A Liberal Democrat Government would improve stations, reopen smaller stations and restore twin-track lines to major routes.

Rail fares would be frozen.

Rail lines leading to and from ports would be electrified to encourage a shift from road haulage to rail.

The network would be converted to electric or hydrogen by 2035. It would support HS2

Animals and wildlife

The principle of animal sentience would be enshrined in UK law to provide greater regard for animal welfare in policy making.

Maximum sentences would be increased to five years for animal cruelty offences.

THE SNP 'Stronger for Scotland'

UK Greenhouse Gas emissions targets

SNP MPs would call for the UK as a whole to achieve a 75% reduction in emissions by 2030; going down to net-zero no later than 2040. It would want the country to be net zero for all emissions by 2045.

Electric vehicles

It will put pressure on the UK Government to bring forward EV plans to ensure Scotland's 2032 target for a ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel election is matched elsewhere in the UK.

Carbon Capture and Storage

It would want an acceleration and UK-wide development of carbon capture utilisation and storage.

Taxation

Its MPs would back ‘substantial’ tax reforms to support the greener choices agenda, especially with regard to low carbon heating systems in homes and businesses and tax incentives for transport.

Net-zero fund

It would support the creation of a net-zero fund that would see oil and gas receipts ring-fenced. The fund would support energy transition through investment in areas such as renewable energy, electric vehicles and carbon capture utilisation and storage.

EU regulation

The SNP MPs would campaign for the UK to remain aligned with EU environmental regulations in the event of Brexit.

Renewables

The party would support a Green Energy Deal to ensure renewables schemes receive the necessary support.

THE GREEN PARTY ‘If not now, when?’

Green New Deal

A Green Party Government would introduce a Green New Deal that would encompass energy, housing, transport, industry, food, farming, forestry and people’s wages.

Brexit, PR and taxes

These would all be geared to fight climate change. If elected, the Green Party would want the UK to harness the full potential of the EU and would campaign for a ‘People’s Vote’ with its government on the side remaining in the EU during a second referendum.

It would ensure the wealthiest in society pay their fair share to ensure the Green Deal was successful.

All 16-year-olds would be given the vote in a proportional representation (PR) system of polling. This could be significant, given the school student protests.

Net zero by 2030

The party committed the UK to achieve net-zero greenhouse gas emission by 2030.

The Green New Deal would be underpinned by £100bn per year in investment. It would aim for the UK to meet most of its energy needs from renewable sources; reduce overall energy demand from buildings and homes and transform UK industry, transport and land use.

Energy/renewables

The Green Party said that replacing fossil fuel with renewables is the key to the success of its policies.

There would be support for solar, geothermal, tidal, hydro and other renewable energies to provide much of the remainder of the UK's energy supplies

The planning system would be transformed so that it is geared towards creating more windfarms and other renewables.

It would work with the Crown Estate, which owns much of our coastline, to obtain permission to build offshore windfarms and other renewable schemes. A Green Government would ensure the profits are ploughed straight back to the UK Government.

Subsidies would be removed from the oil and gas sector.

A new carbon tax on all fossil fuel imports and domestic extraction based on greenhouse gas emissions produced when fuel is burnt. There would be a tax on imported energy, based on embedded emissions. The tax would be raised progressively over the coming decade to render coal, oil and gas financially unviable.

It would expand our ability to store surplus energy from renewables.

There would be a ban on the construction of nuclear power stations.

It would emphasise the need for behavioural change and provide more training for businesses to encourage energy consumption efficiency.

Hydraulic fracturing

A Green Government would ban fracking and other unconventional forms of fossil fuel extraction.

Housing

A Green Government would improve the insulation of homes to save people money

It would ensure new developments are located and designed so that residents do not need cars through the provision of good pedestrian access or to ensure they are within 1km of a train, tube or tram stop, or within 500m of a high frequency bus service.

The party would improve the energy efficiency of every UK home that needs it by 2030, and through the use of sustainable materials.

It would improve 1m homes a year so that they could reach the highest standard of energy efficiency.

The Greens would ensure 10m homes can generate energy by 2030 through renewables by the roll-out of solar panels and other measures.

It would launch a programme to replace domestic boilers with heat pumps, and solar thermal, geothermal, biomass and stored heat technologies. It would deploy district heat networks.

A Green Party Government would ensure that all 8m UK rented homes are rated in the top category for energy efficiency.

Transport

The Green Party manifesto said that the UK's reliance on high carbon modes, such as the private car, contributed to congestion, road danger, air pollution and reduced physical activity. It pledged to spend £2.5bn a year on new cycle ways and footpaths.

It would cut the cost of travelling by train and bus and provide new routes for electric coaches.

It would open new rail networks, re-open closed stations and cancel HS2. It would electrify all rail lines and encourage community ownership of short-distance rail routes.

Ports would be given better rail routes, especially for freight. There would be investment to encourage the shift from road to rail for the majority of freight transport.

CO₂ from airlines

Domestic flights would lose VAT exemption with an extra surcharge introduced for domestic aviation fuel.

The Greens would ban advertising by airlines and introduce a 'frequent flyer' levy for people who take more than one return flight a year.

It would stop the building of new runways and the increased road capacity.

People would be encouraged to take 'staycations' – rather than fly abroad on holiday –with domestic hotels and attractions becoming VAT exempt to reduce prices.

Petrol and diesel cars ban

It would end the sale of new diesel and petrol engined vehicles by 2030. It would incentivise the replacement of traditional engined vehicles with electric ones, but the overall aim is to minimise the number of vehicles on our roads.

All petrol stations would have to offer electric charge-points by 2025.

Speed limits and use of private vehicles

The 20mph speed limits, such as those trialled in Edinburgh and proposed for Glasgow, would become the norm. The maximum speed would be 40mph in non-residential areas, except for major roads.

The Green would ensure new residents are not forced into car use by using the planning system to create better cycle and footpaths.

Stay-at-home working and teleconferencing would be encouraged to cut down on vehicle trips.

Industry

It aims to boost industry by making the UK a centre for the manufacture of renewable energy infrastructure.

Grants would be provided to companies to replace old high-emitting equipment with the latest low carbon equipment. Investment in 'clean' R&D will also lead to job creation.

Regional mutual banks would be encouraged run by community co-operatives to develop technologies to help decarbonise our economy.

A Green Party Government would pave the way for the rapid decommissioning of North Sea oil rigs and phase out the UK's remaining coal plants through a Just Transition strategy to help those workers who would be affected.

The Greens would reduce the emission of polluting fluorinated gases for fridges, air conditioners and aerosols in all manufactured goods.

They would ban the production of single-use plastics for use in packaging and invest in R&D to find alternatives.

They would start the deployment of a Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) system that can deal with CO2 emissions from manufacture of iron, steel and cement.

Farming

A Green Party Government would work with farmers to drive subsidies towards organic farming, agroforestry and mixed farming and other sustainable and environmentally friendly forms of land use.

Farmers would be given grants to replace ageing high-emitting carbon intensive farming machine with low carbon alternatives, such as bio-fuel machinery. There would be money to improve farm buildings and infrastructure and encourage a shift towards agroecological farming.

It would encourage the replacement of the majority of hedgerows that have been lost in the last 50 years.

A new land commission would investigate the impacts of having land ownership concentrated in the hands of a few and there would be a 'fair taxation' system of Land Value Tax.

The Greens pledged to plant 700 million new trees, including in urban areas and aim for 50% of all farms to be engaged in agroforestry by 2030.

The 'Rewilding' of spaces would provide new habitats for animals.

Tree planting and soil restoration would take place in upland catchment areas aimed at preventing flooding.

Food sources

The moratorium on Genetically Modified (GM) foods would continue.

A new Food and Agriculture Research Council would conduct research into sustainable and healthy food production and distribution.

There would be support for new research into the reduction of methane emissions from livestock, the conservation and development of high quality soils.

Urban food growing, including new community farms and allotments would be encouraged either through the planning system or matching gardeners with people who have the skills to encourage communities to grow their own food.

Clear labelling on food packaging would inform consumers whether the food they are considering buying has been subject to farming with carbon emissions, high animal welfare and intensive production methods.

A tax on meat and dairy products would be imposed over the next 10 years, to reduce the 5% of the UK's carbon emissions that come from the methane produced by livestock.

The Greens would launch a public information campaign about biodiversity loss and the consequences of climate change.

THE BREXIT PARTY

'Contract With The People'

Funding

Environmental funding would be partly financed by savings made by the UK not having to pay its annual contribution to the EU after Brexit.

Tree planting and support for United Nations initiative.

The party, if elected, said it would plant 'millions' of trees to capture CO₂ and promote a global initiative at the UN.

Recycling:

It would recycle UK waste and make it illegal for it to be exported across the world to be burnt, buried or dumped at sea.

Transport

It said Brexit would allow investment in transport infrastructure.

There would be free wi-fi on public transport

HS2

The Brexit Party would scrap HS2 if elected.