

Manifesto 2024 Ratification Briefing Paper

Introduction

The Green Party campaigned in the July 2024 general election based on manifesto material posted on its web site at [1]. This got a vast amount of coverage for the policies proposed.

The manifesto is a very important document for the Green Party both during the general election and subsequently – until we produce the next general election manifesto.

It supplements the party's policy book the Policies for a Sustainable Society (PSS). It is much more specific than PSS in terms of what we can achieve in the next few years and also outlines the whole framework for how the Green Party programme could be financed.

It is designed to be used extensively by Green Party External Communications as the basis of our policies going forwards.

Constitution and Standing Orders

The manifesto has a role at the time of the general election, but also subsequently as elected members and other representatives of the party have a role in promoting the policies as expressed in the manifesto (see [2]). In particular, our Members of Parliament stood, and were elected, on this manifesto and can be expected to promote the policies in the manifesto in parliament.

The Standing Orders for the Conduct of Conference allows proposals to change, delete or add to manifestos (see [3]). Thus, it is important that it is clear what is the manifesto and what is not, in order that we have a clear view on which material in [1] is the manifesto referred to.

The Green Party Regional Council Standing Orders (see [4]) calls for election manifestos to be taken to the next available conference even if this is subsequent to the election. The next available conference is clearly the Autumn 2024 conference on September 6th to 8th.

In order for the policy relating to the manifesto to be clear, the Climate Emergency Policy Working Group (CEPWG) is bringing a policy motion to this conference to ratify the long version with cover (see [5]) to be what is constitutionally understood to be the election manifesto. The motion itself is at [14].

The CEPWG is proposing this ratification motion to conference as other bodies that might have done this, such as GPRC or Policy Development Committee (PDC), have not done this. Various standing orders (see [2], [3] and [4]) are not clear who should do this.

As the manifesto [5] is a very important policy statement, CEPWG propose that taking it to conference is best done as a policy motion (as per [2] and [3]) and seek accreditation for it as allowed for a policy motion. There is no reason that the manifesto should have a lower bar of quality, scrutiny and consultation than any other policy motion.

The constitution [2] states that a briefing paper should accompany a policy motion and accreditation requires high quality supporting evidence. This briefing paper attempts to satisfy these requirements.

Note that there have been other proposals to bring the ratification of the manifesto to an AGM or be part of a report. This seems inappropriate as the manifesto is clearly policy. A policy motion thus seems the best method to take it to conference. The constitution makes a

clear distinction between AGMs and conferences – so the AGM approach does not meet the requirement to take the manifesto to the next conference.

Although there will no doubt be other interpretations of standing orders, we commend this as a pragmatic way to reach policy clarity as soon as possible.

Approval status

The manifesto was approved with conditions by GPRC in meetings on 30 May and 1 June (see [6]).

In the 30 May GPRC meeting a number of extensions were approved to specific policies. This was done where the wording of the manifesto was considered to extend the interpretation of the policies. The policy numbers concerned are listed in the 30 May minutes.

In the 30 May GPRC meeting, a number of interim policies were also approved. This is where the text in the manifesto filled a gap in the existing policy. These interim policies are now posted in the Interim Policy Position forum (see [7]). Posting on this forum is a step to bringing these interim policies for ratification to Autumn 2024 conference. It makes sense to take the interim policy motions alongside the manifesto ratification motion.

There was also a GPRC meeting on 22 June. This states that the manifesto was approved subject to conditions. It is unclear whether the conditions were met. The Policy Development Committee has a policy statements log [8] that shows the June 2024 Manifesto as “Approved”.

Rather than being left in any uncertainty about the status of the manifesto, the CEPWG see the right way forward is to ratify the manifesto we all campaigned on in the recent general election and go forwards from there.

The CEPWG see a need to clarify the manifesto process – but this is not the subject of this motion.

The CEPWG has agreed to propose this motion to conference and endorse it for accreditation.

Consultation

There was a vast amount of consultation within and without the Green Party in constructing the manifesto. This included external Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and within the party with Policy Working Groups (PWGs).

This cannot all be documented here – but to show one of the fruits of this consultation see Friends of the Earth General Election 2024 manifesto assessment at [10] and [13] where due to great consultation work, the Green Party scored highly.

Consultation with Policy Working Groups primarily occurred in a period up until the end of January 2024. The CEPWG took a very active role in this consultation providing suggestions for text and background material. The CEPWG had a role in coordinating input on environmental concerns including other PWGs such as Housing, Finance and Economy, Land, Transport, Energy, Food and Agriculture, Marine and Coastal and Wildlife and Habitats.

The Climate Emergency Policy Working Group also had many discussions with Policy Development Committee about the production of the manifesto and also some interactions with Green Party Regional Council.

The extensive role of the CEPWG in the production of the manifesto puts the CPEWG in a good position to propose this motion. The CPEWG also benefits from the clarity of policy on the status of the 2024 manifesto and its background material (see below).

Background material

This section is limited to collecting together existing background documentation which clearly relates to the final version of the manifesto at [5]. This collectively is a considerable body of research.

This motion and this section of the briefing paper is being used as a vehicle for collecting and encouraging members of the manifesto writing group to provide background material that was used in preparation of the manifesto. This material is very important for ongoing development work by policy working groups.

We are hoping to be able to add additional material to this list prior to Autumn 2024 conference.

Carbon Tax Briefing. See [11]. This note explains the underlying assumptions about how the carbon tax revenue on page 45 of [5] was arrived at. This includes assumptions on:

- declining emissions
- the split into taxes applied on territorial emissions, embedded in imports and fossil fuel exports
- the carbon tax rate
- the different sectors (eg industry)
- impacts on other related taxes

Manifesto Tax Summary. See [11]. Page 45 of the manifesto [5] has a breakdown of tax revenue, but just has 1 row for each of wealth and business taxes. This note breaks the numbers down further for wealth and business taxes into about 15 rows.

Manifesto briefing note on costs. See [11]. Likewise page 45 of the manifesto [5] has limited rows on both operational and capital spend. There is a much more refined breakdown of these numbers in this note.

Tax and Spend model. See [11]. This note also contains a more refined breakdown of spend numbers than in the manifesto. It also contains an analysis of the under-pinning of the Green Party numbers on top of the OBR forecasts and the impacts, from a conventional economists' point of view, on debt to GDP ratio.

Candidate communications. See [11]. During the general election campaign a document was constructed for candidates which complements the manifesto. To this extent it provides useful background for what is in the manifesto.

Friends of the Earth Supplementary Evidence. See [13]. As described, under consultation above, there was extensive consultation with Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace. As part of this the Green Party provided 12 pages of background documentation to them. This provides extensive analysis of how the Green Party policy set, PSS (see [13]), works with the manifesto (see [5]) to have comprehensive coverage of the Friends of the Earth criteria.

Manifesto analysis. See [12]. This analysis contains a wider analysis of the Green Party manifesto in the context of other party manifestos.

- it highlights the strengths and weaknesses and possible alternative approaches that could be taken. This partially covers counter-arguments that were considered in the construction of the manifesto [5]
- it includes an analysis of the overall impact on different income deciles of the Green Party tax and spend package
- it links back some of the “Green New Deal” finance numbers to original calculations and research done by the Energy Policy Model Improvement Subgroup (EPM ISG) – a subgroup of the CEPWG. The Energy Policy Model and Climate and Energy Policy Background Papers ([15] and [16]) referenced includes extensive commentary, glossary and references to back this up.
- a financial analysis to make as direct a comparison as possible with other party financial commitments
- a financial analysis to make as direct a comparison as possible between the Green Party offer in the 2019 general election manifesto and the 2024 general election manifesto
- a partial comparison of non-financial numeric commitments in different party manifestos
- in addition, a few topics (eg aviation and electricity) are drilled into more detail to see whether the proposals are realistic and/or sufficient

Ongoing campaigning

The importance of having the manifesto as a campaigning document cannot be over-stated. The objective of the party is to implement its policies, and the manifesto [5] clearly is a statement of what we should push to achieve, by whatever means, over the next 5 years.

References

- [1] Green Party 2024 General Election Manifesto collection <https://greenparty.org.uk/about/our-manifesto/>
- [2] Green Party Constitution <https://members.greenparty.org.uk/constitution>
- [3] Green Party Standing Orders for the Conduct of Conference <https://spaces.greenparty.org.uk/s/2024-autumn-conference-agenda-forum/>
- [4] Green Party Regional Council Standing Orders <https://spaces.greenparty.org.uk/s/gprc/cfiles/download/74c23ccc-4d7d-4d71-9b32-ec6aee3b5fd9>
- [5] Green Party 2024 General Election Manifesto Long Version with cover <https://greenparty.org.uk/app/uploads/2024/06/Green-Party-2024-General-Election-Manifesto-Long-version-with-cover.pdf>
- [6] GPRC Minutes <https://spaces.greenparty.org.uk/s/gprc/cfiles/browse/index?fid=1764>
- [7] Interim Policy Position for manifesto <https://spaces.greenparty.org.uk/s/interim-policy-positions-forum/post/post/view?id=14154>
- [8] PDC Policy Statements Log <https://spaces.greenparty.org.uk/s/policy-development-committee/cfiles/download/0d36ecf7-3764-49be-9f43-71cd95be0fb0>
- [9] Green Party Policies for a Sustainable Society <https://policyarchive.greenparty.org.uk/>

- [10] Friends of the Earth General Election 2024 manifesto assessment
<https://friendsoftheearth.uk/system-change/general-election-2024-manifestos-final-scores>
- [11] Green Party manifesto supporting documents
<https://spaces.greenparty.org.uk/s/climate-change-policy/cfiles/browse/index?fid=2075>
(material selectively available on request with associated support for explanations)
- [12] Manifesto analysis <https://spaces.greenparty.org.uk/s/climate-change-policy/cfiles/browse/index?fid=2062>
- [13] Friends of the Earth Supplementary Evidence
<https://cdn.friendsoftheearth.uk/sites/default/files/downloads/Supplementary%20evidence%20%E2%80%93%20Green%20Party%20%E2%80%93%20General%20election%202024.pdf>
- [14] Manifesto ratification motion <https://spaces.greenparty.org.uk/s/2024-autumn-conference-agenda-forum/post/post/view?id=14173>
- [15] Climate Emergency Policy Background Paper
<https://spaces.greenparty.org.uk/s/climate-change-policy/cfiles/browse/index?fid=524>
- [16] Energy Policy Background Paper <https://spaces.greenparty.org.uk/s/energy-policy-working-group/cfiles/browse/index?fid=13>

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