

Planning

- Require local authorities to set out a *local carbon plan* showing how their area will meet overall greenhouse gas reduction targets.
- Put *planning back* in the hands of local government by:
 - repealing the *National Planning Policy Framework* and in particular its presumption in favour of economic development;
 - restricting the ability of the Secretary of State to *call in* planning applications;
 - restricting the right of applicants to *appeal* only where there has been an error in the planning process;
 - strengthening local authorities' powers to prevent changes of use for important *community facilities* such as local shops, pubs and meeting halls;
 - giving local authorities *planning powers* to support local shops and businesses through planning policies including business conservation areas, ensuring basic shops are available within walking distance in all urban areas, restricting the number of payday lenders and restricting the power of supermarkets; and
 - introducing a *community right of appeal* where a development is non-compliant with a neighbourhood plan or local plan.
- Support preservation of the *historic environment*, in part by being flexible about how older buildings reduce their energy use.

Constitutional Convention

The Green Party supports calls for a Constitutional Convention led by citizens – a People's Convention. We'd use that opportunity to make the case for the changes detailed above. Parts of England, based on groups of local authorities, could come together to exercise greater powers; these might amount to existing regions, or possibly city regions. The process must be driven by the bottom up decisions of local authorities, not by top down direction. The Convention would also consider further devolution to Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales. As set out above, we favour much greater devolution to and tax-raising powers for local authorities, with this settlement put beyond future Whitehall revision by giving formal constitutional protection to local democracy. Any constitutional changes should be subject to referendums.

WALES

Greens have long supported the process of devolution in Wales. We believe that the people of Wales should enjoy the degree of autonomy, perhaps including full self-government or independence, that they wish to have, as expressed in a referendum.

Up until any such referendum, Greens in Wales will focus on improving and maximising the potential of the current devolution settlement.

Reflecting the devolved status of Wales within the UK, the Wales Green Party has an autonomous status within the wider party and publishes independent policy statements and its own manifesto covering all areas of devolved power. These include matters such as health, education, transport and housing.

Greens in Wales would:

- Increase *real power* at all levels, from local councils up to the Welsh Assembly.
- Increase the *number* of Assembly members.
- Push for the National Assembly to become a *Parliament* with powers equal to those in Scotland.

One benefit of these increased powers would be the ability for Wales to fully realise its potential as a producer of clean renewable energy.

Greens recognise that cultural diversity is as vital as ecological biodiversity in maintaining and enriching a healthy and fair society. We would promote and protect this cultural diversity at a grassroots level with the promotion of community radio, television, live arts, etc. in both the Welsh and English languages. Wales Green Party policies would help create the strong local sustainable economies and thriving communities necessary for the future of the Welsh language and the nation's rich cultural diversity.