

Green councillors support the living wage...

In Lewisham, Norwich, Lancashire, Camden, Worcester, Stroud and Brighton & Hove, minority Green councillors successfully campaigned for a living wage to help tackle poverty.

We will:

- Increase the minimum wage so that it is a *living wage*. We propose a minimum wage target for everyone who is working in the UK of £10 per hour by 2020. In 2015 this would mean a minimum wage of £8.10 an hour generally (and £9.40 in London), saving £2.4 billion a year in tax credits and generating an additional £1.5 billion a year in income tax and National Insurance. This would be offset by £0.7 billion a year additional costs in the public sector.
- Revive the role of democratic *trade unions*, including the right to belong to a union and have the employer recognise it, and the right to take industrial action, including strikes and peaceful picketing.
- Phase in a *35-hour week*. Apart from improving the quality of our lives, this would combat unemployment by sharing available work out more equitably.
- Provide a comprehensive nationwide system of good-quality pre-school *early education and childcare*, free at the point of delivery.
- End exploitative *zero-hours contracts*.
- End the exploitation of *interns*, and ensure no unpaid full-time internship lasts more than four weeks.
- Make *equal pay* for men and women a reality.
- Introduce a *maximum pay ratio of 10:1* between the best paid and the worst paid in every organisation.
- End *blacklisting*. We will set up a full investigation into blacklisting in the construction industry and consider the creation of a new criminal offence.
- Give *workers a greater say* in the running of their companies, including employee-elected directors in medium and larger companies.
- *Reduce Employment Tribunal fees* so that tribunals are accessible to workers.

Greens in power carry out our policies

The Green-led administration in Brighton cut the chief executive's salary and raised the pay of the lowest grades, bringing the ratio between the highest and lowest paid Council staff to just over 10:1.

FINANCE

The UK finance industry is a disaster area. Far from generating genuine wealth, its recklessness and greed created the greatest recession since the 1930s, which in turn contributed to the present regime of austerity and cuts to public services.

It has presided over other failures, from the mis-selling of endowment mortgages and payment protection insurance, to the appallingly low returns and high charges of the state-subsidised private pensions industry, its failure to mobilise long-term finance for renewable energy and its collusion in and creation of a whole industry of tax avoidance and evasion.

Meanwhile, those who work in the industry at senior level show no signs of remorse and continue to pocket huge salaries and bonuses. Finance needs root and branch reform. We would:

- Move towards *creating all national currency* through a national monetary authority, answerable to Parliament. The power to create money must be taken out of the hands of private banks. Detailed proposals are set out in the 'Regaining control of our money' box.
- Separate *retail and investment banking*. Retail banks should be required to limit their role to taking deposits and making loans that facilitate economic activity; investment banks should take the form of partnerships rather than limited companies.
- Introduce *controls on bank lending*.
- Act to *control payday lenders* and offer alternatives (see the 'Greens in power' credit union box).
- We will use the government-owned *Royal Bank of Scotland to create a network of local banks* for every city and region, ensuring that each bank is a People's Bank, obliged to offer cheap basic banking services.