

# *Trafford*

## **Green Party**



### ***Press Release***

30<sup>th</sup> March 2009

## **LABOUR FAILS THOSE ON LOW INCOMES AND THE PLANET!**

Leading Greens today criticised a Labour energy minister for destroying the chances that a fuel poverty bill would become law.

The Fuel Poverty Bill was backed by campaigning groups including Age Concern, Help the Aged and Child Poverty Action Group and would have introduced:

- \* A major energy efficiency programme to bring existing homes up to the energy efficiency standards of modern houses, cutting fuel poverty and creating green employment,

- \* 'Social tariffs' to protect vulnerable people like pensioners from high energy bills

Joan Ruddock, MP led the debate for the government in her role as an energy minister.

Despite cross-party support for the bill, it ran out of time because Labour decided to 'talk out' the bill, delaying a vote on it until there was no time left in the House of Commons. Ms Ruddock was still speaking after a four-hour debate when the time ran out, killing the bill's chances.

The Green Party of England and Wales, which was holding its national spring conference at the time, rushed out an emergency motion criticising Ms Ruddock for her tactics.

Cllr Darren Johnson, the Green Party's trade and industry spokesperson said:

"Instead of allowing an honest vote by MPs, Joan Ruddock chose underhand tactics to avoid a democratic decision on these important proposals. This sabotage, and her earlier support for Heathrow expansion, is making a mockery of her job as energy and climate change minister."

Margaret Westbrook, Green Party Euro Candidate for the North West, said:

"This bill would have protected millions from the terrible choice between heating and eating, which too many pensioners and other vulnerable people have to make. Quite rightly, many others will feel let down by the underhand way in which the government caused this bill to be defeated, at a time when they are facing some time on low levels of income due to the recession.

Trafford Green Party wholeheartedly supports the Fuel Poverty Bill and has been asking the council for free insulation for all residents for some months as part of our 10 point Climate Change Challenge " (see point 5 below)

## ENDS

### Notes to editors:

1. Organisations backing the bill include Age Concern, Help the Aged, Child Poverty Action Group, Friends of the Earth and Disability Alliance.
2. The Association for the Conservation of Energy states that; 'Fuel poverty is defined as having to spend at least 10% of your income to maintain a reasonable level of warmth in your home. Fuel poverty blights the lives of millions of our poorest and most vulnerable households. Every year over 20,000 more people die in the winter months than in the summer months, largely due to cold-related illnesses. Many more become ill as a result of living in cold, damp homes. Every winter one in three older people have to live in one room to keep warm and one in ten have to cut back on essentials such as food or clothes. The main reason is cold homes – homes so poorly insulated that they "leak heat". It's a problem that affects older people, disabled people and many families with young children'
3. A briefing on the bill is available at;  
[[http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/event\\_background\\_documents/fuel\\_poverty\\_bill\\_mp\\_brief.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/event_background_documents/fuel_poverty_bill_mp_brief.pdf)][1]
4. The text of Friday's debate is at  
[<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmhansrd/cm090320/debtext/90320-0001.htm#09032039000002>][2]

[1]:

[http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/event\\_background\\_documents/fuel\\_poverty\\_bill\\_mp\\_brief.pdf](http://www.foe.co.uk/resource/event_background_documents/fuel_poverty_bill_mp_brief.pdf)

[2]:

<http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200809/cmhansrd/cm090320/debtext/90320-0001.htm#09032039000002>

URL: <http://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2009-03-23-ruddock-climate-change.html>

5. Trafford Green Party is also particularly keen to promote the loft and cavity wall insulation scheme, which can be free to some residents on low incomes. It also entitles all residents to a Council Tax rebate. Trafford Green Party believe this scheme should be extended as a free scheme to all householders. We are campaigning for this to be offered in Trafford as it has been through a Green Councillor in Kirklees through our Climate Change Challenge below. Not only will such initiatives tackle the problem of carbon emissions and help people in fuel poverty but will also provide much needed green and sustainable employment.

# 10- point Climate Change Challenge to Trafford Council

## Working towards a low carbon economy

1. *Cut CO2 emissions by an extra 9% every year (creating a cut of 25% by 2011 and nearly 90% by 2030).*
2. *Collect 70% of all household waste for recycling or local composting by 2015.*
3. *Set a 20mph speed limit on residential roads across the Borough and put pedestrians first.*
4. *Make public transport more attractive by improving service, reducing fares and introducing more family and season tickets.*
5. *Support policies designed to reduce individual car use, encourage car-sharing and support walking, cycling and public transport initiatives.*
6. *Support sustainable energy by sourcing all electricity, including street lighting, from genuinely renewable supplies.*
7. *Say no to the destruction of our environment by blocking expansion of Manchester Airport and any new road building.*
8. *Help Trafford residents to do their bit with free insulation. Support the creation of micro-generation power schemes and other kinds of decentralised energy production.*
9. *Set the highest possible standard for new buildings by insisting that every new development surpasses the BREEAM 'Excellent' standard.*
10. *Eat local with a food strategy that re-localises food supplies to schools and other Council facilities. Make it easier for everybody to grow their own and buy local through allotments, farmers' markets and other projects.*

6. Trafford Green Party was set up in January 2007

7. Further information can be found on our website

[www.traffordgreens.org.uk](http://www.traffordgreens.org.uk)

8. For details of the recent conference and national policy see

[www.greenparty.org.uk](http://www.greenparty.org.uk)

## CONTACTS

North West Green Party press office 0161 225 4863

Green Party national press office 020 7561 0282

Jeni Law, Trafford Green Party Press Officer 07769 892079

Bridget Green, Trafford Green Party Chair 0161 928 7742

Margaret Westbrook Euro Election candidate 0161 865 6064