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POLLUTION

Background

PL100 Uncontrolled economic growth and the increasing human population have led to a massive exploitation of natural resources and are reducing the quality of life on Earth. We have polluted the air, the land, the lakes, rivers and oceans. More importantly, we are destroying the natural restorative systems on which life depends for survival.

PL101 Exploitation of resources, energy demand and the pollution that results have greatly reduced the amount and quality of natural communities of plants and animals throughout the world. They have also led to a process of atmospheric warming which now poses a threat of climate change so widespread and rapid that natural systems stand little chance of adaptive evolution. The disastrous changes put in train by humankind since the industrial revolution threaten the future of civilisation and the future of a majority of species on Earth. (see 'Climate Change' section)

PL102 Pollution is not coincidental to economic activity, but is presently an integral part of it. Frequently it is caused by the activities of one group of people, while its costs and impacts are borne by others and by the biosphere. Economic growth will not stop the greenhouse effect. Increasing population pressure will not generate more land for sustainable food production.

Changes of lifestyle and of government in line with the principles of the Green Party are essential to ensure a viable future and an end to pollution.

PL103 Pollution has to be stopped at source. Economic growth has to be limited and the health and safety of the planet must become the main criteria in political and social development. By adopting these Green Party principles, natural diversity can be maintained and the quality of life can be improved for all species on the planet.

Principles

PL200 Development and Maintenance of Sustainable Systems.

- a) Pollution reduces our ability to manage resources and natural systems in a sustainable and ecological way.
- b) Pollution damages natural restorative systems.

PL201 Resource Conservation a) The efficient use of resources, the recycling of materials and the establishment of binding timetables to reduce the use of toxic chemicals and the production of waste, wherever it is feasible to do so, will minimise environmental pollution and reduce absolute cost.

PL202 Global Rights a) Environmental pollution reduces the range of choice for future generations. b) Environmental pollution

directly damages health and reduces potential lifespan. c) Environmental pollution directly and indirectly damages natural communities of plants and animals. d) Environmental pollution transgresses national boundaries both in space and through time. It is a global responsibility for all countries to accept full economic and environmental responsibility for their own pollution.

Objectives

PL300 To negotiate effective international and national agreements for pollution control and minimisation, and to ensure their implementation at local levels through industry, agriculture and society at large.

PL301 To continuously monitor the environment using agreed protocols to ensure comparability of data and to ensure the effective transmission of all relevant data on pollution between states through international agencies such as the United Nations.

PL302 To require industries to systematically audit and publish their use of toxic chemicals, and to establish binding timetables to reduce such use.

PL303 To guarantee the public's right to know about chemical usage and emissions.

PL304 To determine socially and environmentally acceptable levels for pollutants based on both

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chronic and interactive effects. Environmental and health considerations will be given precedence over economic factors in the determination of such levels.

PL305 To guarantee the public's right to know about the health and environmental aspects of pollution and to actively promote environmental education.

PL306 To introduce environmental impact and improvement analysis into all public planning decisions, and to ensure free public access to the evidence used in both the analysis and in the final assessment.

Policy

International

PL400 In principle, the import of toxic, hazardous or radioactive waste into the UK for treatment, reprocessing or disposal will be banned immediately. However, support will be provided for those less-developed countries which continue to have difficulty in dealing with such waste.

PL401 The import of products derived from hazardous industries and processes will be resisted by selective taxes and prohibitions.

National

PL410 A national Environmental Protection Commission (EPC) will be set up to promote and integrate research and development on public health and environmental protection. It will provide advice to district authorities, public bodies and individuals. It will also draft and promote public legislation for amendment and enactment as appropriate, and ad-

vice on international issues. The EPC will largely absorb the functions of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Pollution.

PL411 The EPC will take responsibility for the control, storage and monitoring of all radioactive waste derived from manufacturing industry, medical sources and from nuclear power.

PL412 The EPC will establish a system for monitoring, approving and licensing new and established products and production processes. The criteria used will be based on the Green principles of minimum waste, minimum pollution, maximum energy efficiency, safety, and environmental improvement.

PL413 The EPC will issue guidelines to manufacturers and district authorities for the full labelling of all products for sale. These guidelines will provide for adequate warning of potentially harmful treatments, ingredients, diluents, propellants and effects.

PL414. The Green Party deplors the intransigent attitude of the United Kingdom government to the damaging biological effects to those living in close proximity to high voltage power cables, caused by the associated electromagnetic field. This constitutes an electrical pollution. Immediate action should be taken to ensure that no high voltage cables are sited near habitation and that those that are should be re-sited as soon as possible, recognising considerable urgency.

Local

PL420 Each district authority will set up a Community Health and Environmental Council (CHEC)

with professional staff and with elected representatives. It will be responsible for interpreting environmental impact and improvement assessments in local planning. It will define the operating conditions for local commercial and industrial enterprises, including agriculture, and make appropriate recommendations to the district authority. The CHEC will develop and greatly extend the role and functions of the Health and Safety Executive and the local Environmental Health Officers.

PL421 Industries will be required to systematically audit their production procedures and to publish details of their chemical usage and emissions. Binding timetables for reducing the use of toxic chemicals, for the recycling of materials in production and for reducing waste will be established for local industries by district authorities. These timetables will be monitored by the local CHECs.

PL422 Local enterprises will be required to maintain records of effluent quality and quantity. These will be available for immediate inspection by CHEC officers. CHEC officers will be empowered to inspect working practices and to take samples on and off site as they see fit. Medical records of all workers will be available for inspection by CHEC officers, but under conditions of the strictest confidence for the workers concerned.

PL423 The treatment, deposition and discharge of all industrial and commercial wastes will be licensed by the district authorities and controlled by the CHEC using guidelines provided by the EPC.

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PL424 Threshold limit values for workers involved in hazardous working practices will be revised downwards to account for chronic, and long-term effects. Limits will be set by CHECs working on maximum levels determined by the EPC and paying regard to synergistic interactions.

PL425 Statistical information relating to worker exposure and to waste management will be available to the public on request.

PL426 In order to safeguard health and to protect the environment, CHECs will be empowered to revoke operating licences immediately if they see fit. There will be no Crown immunity.

PL427 It will be the responsibility of prospective CHEC licensees to establish that their operating practices will be safe, efficient and environmentally benign.

PL428 Waste disposal on the principle of 'dilute and disperse' will no longer be generally acceptable. District authorities will introduce schemes for separating, treating, recycling and processing domestic, commercial and industrial waste.

PL429 With the exception of sewage and biodegradable organic waste, no toxic material shall be discharged to the public sewerage system. If sewage and other organic waste must be discharged into lakes, rivers or the sea, it shall be fully treated in such a way as the effluent will not damage the environment. The eventual aim should be the recycling of all sewage.

PL430 Differential corporation tax will favour those enterprises

causing minimal environmental damage. Taxes on the quantity and quality of industrial waste will be levied on producers.

PL431 Individuals and organisations concerned with generating pollution will be held responsible for the costs of control and for any damage caused, however remote in time or distance. There will be no Crown immunity.

PL432 If suggestive evidence emerges that a pollutant or product may have an adverse effect on the health of humans or the environment, a levy will be placed on the process sufficient to pay for scientific research on the link between pollutant and effect. If a causal association seems reasonable, but the harm is not sufficient to justify the banning of the pollutant or product, a levy will be placed on the process sufficient to pay for the extra health or environmental service work caused by the product.