

POLICY

ONE WORLD. ONE CHANCE.

Vote Green Party 

Small Firms

Building a sustainable economy

Small businesses and the selfemployed are under pressure as never before. Huge supermarkets destroy local shops and exploit the smaller companies that supply them. Big companies pay late and poach workers from small firms. Complex regulation makes life impossible. Many self-employed people find themselves working desperately hard for little reward.

Yet on the whole it is not small businesses that cause pollution, transport goods between continents, waste resources and exploit their workers. They serve largely local markets and strengthen local economies and communities. They provide many jobs, are often centres of creativity and innovation, and are often in the lead in the emerging green economy, providing organic food and services like insulation or community transport. Many are cooperatives or community enterprises. Small business goes with the grain of the green ethos – building a local and self-sufficient economy means building up small business.

The Green Party would:

- reduce bureaucracy by scrapping VAT
- simplify PAYE by abolishing National Insurance as a separate entity and merging it into general

Income Tax.

- amend planning laws to allow small businesses to operate in residential areas
- introduce a Citizen's Income for everybody, making it much easier to become self-employed or start a new business. We support a National Minimum Wage until Citizens's Income is introduced.
- encourage local community banks specifically tasked with supporting small local enterprises
- help small businesses cope with regulation
- assist new start-ups, especially in the green economy
- provide special help for small rural businesses
- introduce legislation to outlaw late payment

Small businesses depend on good roads. Don't you oppose new roads?

Small businesses mainly depend on local roads. We oppose the construction of unnecessary trunk routes that make it easy for huge multi-nationals to compete in local

markets. We would support public transport, and help small firms to work together to deliver services.

Will you lower fuel prices?

Greens believe that combating climate change is the single greatest challenge we face. Failure will damage small businesses along with everyone else, while combating climate change will offer opportunities to some small firms. We must reduce fuel use, especially in transport.

Doesn't your party support higher taxes?

We do believe in making changes to the tax and benefits system so that those on the highest incomes pay more. But the introduction of a Citizen's Income will benefit small businesses, especially by providing a guaranteed income for start ups. You are in favour of implementing the EU Working Time Directive.

Wouldn't this cause difficulties for small firms?

Maintaining a healthy work-life balance is important for everybody. However, we recognise the concerns of small businesses, and would investigate ways of implementing the

Directive flexibly in order to address them.

How could small firms afford to meet many of the worker's rights which you'd want to extend?

Small firms find it hard to attract the best workers partly because their workers lack many rights. We think the right approach is to extend workers rights to all employees, but to give small firms extra help to make a reality of them.

How will you reform business rates?

We would replace the unified business rate by a tax on land values paid to the local authority, rather than direct to central government as at present.

Many small firms depend on the Post Office? How will you improve its performance?

We would run the Royal Mail as a proper public service, avoiding distractions like privatisation and competition, and properly rewarding, motivating and managing the workforce.

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