

## **Green Party Response to the Birmingham City University Students Union**

### **1. What will you do to make buses, trams and local trains in Birmingham cheaper, more reliable and safer for students?**

The Green Party is committed to cheap, reliable, and safe public transport. Across the country, Green councillors have won victories for young people in transport. For example, in Herefordshire, we have successfully campaigned for free weekend bus services and cheaper fares for young people. That's the difference Greens in power can make.

In Birmingham, we are committed to fighting for similar measures and going further. The cost of living crisis has hit young people hard, and by investing in them by making travel cheaper, we can boost the local economy and help small businesses while helping young people who are struggling to make ends meet. We are also committed to investing in our rail in Birmingham. Rail is an integral part of a public transport network and shouldn't be treated as an afterthought. Public transport only works when people put in the effort to ensure that the networks are properly integrated and planned.

Reliability is the number one reason people give for why they drive rather than use public transport. We want to explore ways to improve reliability, including expanding bus lanes, upgrading to an electric fleet of buses, and modernising our bus system with better information for passengers. We are committed to improving connecting services in Birmingham between areas instead of funnelling everyone to the city centre. This is one of the most reliable ways to cut down journey times and improve the reliability of buses in large cities like Birmingham.

Safety on public transport is incredibly important. We have seen steady increases in crimes on public transport, especially hate crimes. We would work with Transport Safety Officers (TSO) to design specific plans to tackle racialised and gendered violence on public transport. TSOs are an integral part of our transport security system, and they are the experts in safety on public transport. We would work with them and the drivers to improve safety. It is also important to discuss the safety of cyclists, we will back protected cycle lanes and well-lit clean cycle routes across the city.

In the West Midlands, transport is shared between the Mayor and the Council. We believe that a strong Green Party in Birmingham can hold the Labour Mayor to account and ensure the benefits of taking buses into public ownership are passed on to passengers, not used to patch Labour's economic mess; and push for the bolder policy this city and region needs to develop the transport we need to flourish.

### **2. How will you work with students to create local employment opportunities during studies and post-graduation?**

The Green Party has pledged as part of our manifesto to create council run apprenticeships and volunteering opportunities for young people. Youth unemployment is currently higher

than at any point in the last decade, and given threats like AI and uncontrolled inflation, this does not look like it will go away on its own.

Opportunities for young people are at the heart of the Green agenda. A green revolution in Britain's energy supply is necessary. Both to reach net zero to combat climate breakdown, and to promote energy independence so that Britain is less vulnerable to foreign energy shocks like the one we have seen in the face of Trump's illegal war in Iran. We want to work towards an unprecedented expansion of Green energy jobs in Birmingham, which will generate hundreds, if not thousands, of well-paying jobs.

As Green councillors, we are committed to community solutions to problems. It is too easy for politicians to propose solutions to the problems young people are facing that do not address their core concerns. To avoid this, we would create a task group with student and graduate representatives from all backgrounds and walks of life to discuss solutions to the unemployment crisis with young people at the heart of decision-making.

Part of the reason students who want to stay in Birmingham can't do so isn't simply the lack of jobs, but the interconnected housing, cost of living, and employment crises. Due to spiralling rents and bills, many young people cannot afford to stay in cities like Birmingham while looking for work. The Green Party will fight to make Birmingham more affordable for young people and all ordinary people in our city, lessening this burden.

### **3. Our students have reported feeling unsafe due to what they perceive as heightened discriminatory discourses. How will you address discrimination and racism in the local area, as well as across the city?**

The rise of the far right in Birmingham is deeply worrying for all of us. Campaigns of intimidation and bigoted rhetoric are on the rise across the world. We have all signed the Brummies United Against Racism pledge, which includes a commitment to working with community groups to fight discrimination wherever it occurs.

We will work to make it easier for all people in Birmingham to report when they have been made to feel discriminated against or unsafe. We will also work with community organisations to defend and expand inclusive community spaces and groups so that people of all backgrounds have places they can go to be free of the fear of discrimination.

The Green Party has values and red lines; we are deeply committed to equality for all people, no matter their ethnic origin, gender, sexuality, or national origin. The way some other parties have normalised bigoted rhetoric to try to win votes is appalling, and we believe the people of Birmingham will reject that politics of hate and fear, and embrace a politics where hope is normal again.

Green Party candidates stand by our values. Candidates running for the Green Party have been involved in anti-discrimination campaigns for years. For example, Siobhan, running in Ladywood, was a founding member of the Birmingham Race Impact Group. The Birmingham

Green Party has always signed on to BRIG campaigns. Green Party candidates stood with students who were arrested for protesting Britain's involvement in the Genocide in Gaza.

The only way to beat discrimination is to oppose it wherever it occurs, which means standing with protesters opposing racist intimidation campaigns and having the strength to call out bigotry whenever we see it.

Signed

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