

Responses to questions from Low Carbon Oxford North and Low Carbon West Oxford.

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1. Does your party accept the need to leave 80% of the world's known fossil fuels reserves in the ground? How does this affect your policies?

Fossil fuels will continue being squandered as long as they remain profitable to the corporations which own them. The drive for profits is central to the way society runs, overriding concerns about the environment. The Socialist Party aims for a new society where energy production and all other industries and services are owned and democratically organised by the whole community. Then, production will be driven by what is in our self-determined best interests, not what makes money for a minority. This will allow us to manage our resources and environment in a sustainable way, without relying on dwindling fossil fuels.

2. Does your party approve of fracking in England and do you support it in Oxfordshire?

Fracking, or methane gas extraction through shale rock fracturing, is an example of how capitalism periodically gets itself out of a fix by finding new techniques or commodities to replace old, unprofitable ones. However, fracking isn't being used to answer the call for global need, but to acquire more profits for corporations. The amount of energy we need is fairly stable and predictable, whereas profitability depends on the uncertainties of the economic market. So, in capitalism, fracking's development isn't going to be straightforward and problem-free. Capitalism's short-term drive for profits is more important than considering any of fracking's long-term consequences.

3. Should Oxford West and Abingdon become a Zero Carbon Community by 2050? If so, what would be your top three policies to achieve this?

We can only be a low carbon community when we stop wasting energy and resources on pushing money around. Institutions like banks, insurance companies and finance departments don't produce anything useful, but prop up the current system. If we replace this system, then we will no longer need these wasteful institutions. Instead, we can produce what we need and want in the most responsible way. So, to be a low carbon community we have to live in a society where this is possible. The only policy the Socialist Party needs to achieve this is to advocate making a socialist society.

4. How would you significantly reduce carbon emissions from transport and personal travel in Oxford West and Abingdon?

Our transport networks are shaped by a messy combination of government policy and what's financially viable in an unstable economy. Reducing carbon emissions comes way down on the list of priorities, and will do until pollution more seriously starts to damage the economy. At the moment, polluting industries remain profitable for the minority which own them. If industries and services such as public transport were instead owned and democratically run by the whole community, then they would be run in the community's best interests. This would include using transport which causes the minimum of pollution.

5. Do you think your party should have polices to improve the energy efficiency of 500,000 homes of the fuel poor a year to Band C on the EPC scale? If not, what level of ambition should you have? What policies would you introduce to achieve this and how will they be funded?

Being fuel poor and unable to afford home improvements can only happen in a society where money is more important than our wellbeing. If we lived in a society where we had free access to goods and services, then there wouldn't be anything to prevent the community building the most energy-efficient homes and increasing the use of renewable sources of power. Funding or subsidies wouldn't be required because money itself would no longer be needed. So, the Socialist Party's aim is to promote a new society where poverty of all types isn't possible.