

Hustings questions on the Environment

Here are some possible questions to ask election hustings. At many election hustings the organisers ask for questions in advance. The questions here are ones which candidates will need to see in advance. If they were to be asked without notice, they would probably need to be simplified.

The underlying idea of the questions is that they need a specific answer and will make it difficult for the candidates just to express benevolent goodwill. There are obviously far more questions here than anyone is going to have a chance of asking. The aim is to give a choice so that people can choose a question or questions which match their particular interest and their particular situation.

1. Will your party work to ensure that the EU and the UK assist and help pay for developing countries to reduce their emissions, develop cleanly and adapt to climate change? How would you do this? For example in September 2014 Norway announced that it had signed a deal with Liberia to pay £150 million to Liberia to stop deforestation by 2020.
2. Is your party prepared to commit to insulating the country's housing stock (including solid wall housing) by 2025? This will reduce people's fuel bills, keep people warmer, reduce emissions and create jobs. What reason can there be for not doing this? (For more information see WWF report *Warm Homes, not Warm Words*.)
3. Will your party commit to ensuring that all new housing is built to carbon neutral standards. (The coalition government has weakened this requirement significantly.)
4. Serious questions have been raised about the environmental dangers from fracking. In addition to this many people argue that to support fracking is incompatible with a serious policy of reducing our emissions by 80% by 2050. What is the position of your party?
5. At the lower oil price North Sea oil is becoming increasingly uneconomic to extract. While there are obviously serious issues about job losses, proposals to support the continued production of oil from the North Sea seem incompatible with a serious policy to reduce our emissions by 80% by 2050. What is the position of your party and what alternatives might you propose to deal with the loss of jobs?
6. Will your party commit to the decarbonisation of the electricity supply by 2030? (Labour are committed to this already.)
7. Does your party acknowledge that the vast majority of confirmed and potential fossil fuel reserves need to be left in the ground if we are going to keep the average rise in global temperature below 2°C? If so, what action would your party take, for example phasing out subsidies for fossil fuels?

8. Does your party support the continued development of onshore wind power (one of the cheapest low carbon technologies)? If not how would your party ensure the development of sufficient low carbon technologies to meet the 2050 target? (This is of particular relevance to the Conservative party who may well include in their manifesto a commitment to phase out any further onshore wind power.)
9. UK territorial emissions have declined steadily since 1990, at around 1% per year (21% in total between 1990 and 2008). At the same time, emissions associated with UK consumption have been increasing as we consume more products from overseas. Does your party acknowledge that we should accept responsibility for these emissions and include them in the 80% reduction by 2050?
10. UK transport produces almost a 3rd of our CO2 emissions. What will your party do to encourage public transport and cycling?

Suggestions from the Salisbury Diocesan Group with thanks to Hope for the Future Campaign
www.hfff.org.uk