WHAT IS A GREEN NEW DEAL? 2

TOP PROPOSALS 3

INTRODUCTION
ALLIANCE GREEN NEW DEAL 4
UK CONTEXT 5
NI CONTEXT 6

CHAPTER 1: THE GREEN ECONOMY
THE GREEN ECONOMY 8
GREEN RECOVERY 8
ECONOMIC POLICIES & DELIVERY 9
JOB CREATION 9
SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE 10
RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT 11
EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS 11

CHAPTER 2: FINANCE ISSUES
FUNDING A GREEN RECOVERY 14
TAX & SPENDING REFORM 14
NI COST OF DIVISION 15
PERSONAL INCOME 16

CHAPTER 3: GOVERNMENT
NI EXECUTIVE 18
ALL-ISLAND COLLABORATION 19
UK GOVERNMENT 19

CHAPTER 4: INFRASTRUCTURE
TRANSPORT 21
ENERGY 24
PLANNING & HOUSING 26
SOCIAL CARE 28

CHAPTER 5: CONSERVATION
AGRICULTURE 30
NATURE & BIODIVERSITY 31
WASTE MANAGEMENT 32

CHAPTER 6: GLOBAL JUSTICE 33
WHAT IS A GREEN NEW DEAL?

The Covid-19 pandemic has shown us how our economy and society directly impact our ability to get through a crisis: from our physical and mental health, our job and our housing conditions, to our access to social security, green space and public services.

Tackling the climate emergency likewise involves much more than environmental policy.

A Green New Deal recognises that tackling the climate emergency goes hand in hand with economic and social justice.

It’s about rapidly decarbonising our economy, and in doing so, creating an equitable, sustainable economy filled with well-paid, secure green jobs in existing and emerging industries.

Alliance has developed its own Green New Deal tailored to Northern Ireland. The policies in this document show how we can all access new opportunities.

We don’t want to return to the status quo. Together, we don’t have to.

OUR PRIORITIES

• Transition to a Green Economy that prioritises investment, wellbeing and the planet.
• Create over 50,000 secure green jobs across NI, with targeted bursaries and retraining allowances.
• Provide a universal, affordable childcare system so we can all access new opportunities.
• Legislate for workers’ rights in the unjust social security system.
• Reform and restore dignity in the unjust social security system.
• Ban current and future fossil fuel exploration, including fracking.
• Hold citizens assemblies to place social dialogue and equity at the centre of decision-making.
• Offer interest-free loans for an electric vehicle and accelerated installation of charging points.
• Establish mandatory agriculture audits to help farmers transition to sustainable farming.
• Demand tax justice.
• Transition to a Green Economy that prioritises investment, wellbeing and the planet.
• Guarantee zero-carbon public transport with better routes right across NI and cheaper fares for disabled people and young people.
• Offer interest-free loans for an electric vehicle and accelerated installation of charging points.
• Establish mandatory agriculture audits to help farmers transition to sustainable farming.
• Ban current and future fossil fuel exploration, including fracking.
• Hold citizens assemblies to place social dialogue and equity at the centre of decision-making.
• Demand tax justice.
INTRODUCTION

ALLIANCE GREEN NEW DEAL

Alliance has a vision for a united community: an inclusive, dynamic, prosperous and sustainable Northern Ireland where we can all thrive, enjoy living freely and securely and be treated with dignity in a region rich with opportunities and biodiversity. We believe in a society for everyone.

As we emerge from the pandemic, it’s time for this vision to become a reality.

From Covid-19 to losing our place in the European Union, we know how unbelievably our lives can be upended, with things we once took for granted taken from us.

The pandemic has laid bare the injustices and weaknesses in our society and economy. We’ve seen the damage caused by acting too slowly, chronically underfunded public services, and flawed, short-term, and self-serving decisions.

Emerging from the pandemic, we will likely face a weakened economy, significant job losses and more entrenched inequalities.

And the pandemic is not the only crisis we face. While everyday life has felt at a standstill the past year, climate change continues to accelerate.

Young people across the world have taken the lead in challenging Governments to protect the planet: they protested to demand the change we need to secure their future. We joined their marches, and we listened. Time is quickly running out to tackle the climate emergency. Yet, in doing so, we can build the future we not only want but need:

• Creating thousands of secure, green jobs by stimulating our economy and reskilling workers;
• Preserving our planet for future generations; and
• Building an inclusive, equitable society for everyone.

We have a chance for change. Change for good.

We want to learn lessons from the past year, build a new society, invest in thousands of secure, green jobs, and transform our economy to become both sustainable and equitable.

Throughout history, periods of great upheaval have sparked incredible change: from the New Deal in response to the Great Depression, to the birth of the welfare state and NHS from World War II.

We, too, have an opportunity to dream big and need a recovery plan that better protects us in the future.

This time, any New Deal must be a Green New Deal, and any economic recovery stimulus must be for a green recovery.

Experts are increasingly stressing the need for a major investment-led, green recovery because addressing the climate emergency goes hand in hand with an economic and social transformation.

The fight against the climate emergency requires more than environmental policy tweaks. The Alliance Green New Deal demands urgent, radical change based on long-term security and collective prosperity.

This is our vision for an urgent, radical overhaul of the policies and practices that hinder our progress and exploit our people and our planet. It’s also our plan to grasp the enormous opportunities in moving towards a sustainable, green economy, with the Alliance Green New Deal creating at least 50,000 jobs by 2030.

This past year, we have acted in solidarity at an unprecedented scale to protect one another. Alliance is committed to breaking down the barriers of division. We want to build upon these efforts and accelerate the creation of a wonderfully diverse, inclusive society that stands united in protecting our future.

The Alliance Green New Deal shows what we can achieve together in Northern Ireland and how Alliance will use its influence in Westminster for UK-wide intervention and global action. It also outlines how we can facilitate collaboration on an all-island basis.

These principles will underpin our priorities going forward, and the document will evolve as we reach milestones in recovery and the reduction of emissions. It’s worth noting that this document is intended to accompany, and not replace, our next Manifesto.

For this reason, the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement demands that high-income countries go further, faster in radically reducing emissions, by no later than the “second half of this century”. It also requires governments to reduce emissions “on the basis of equity, and in the context of sustainable development and efforts to eradicate poverty.”

The 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) will take place in Glasgow in November, under the UK’s presidency. This is a critical landmark as participating countries’ decisions will define our future: we must reach net-zero emissions no later than 2050 to achieve the 1.5°C goal.

The UK has set its target for net-zero emissions by 2050. We believe this is far too slow, and the UK should be providing more robust and demonstrable leadership. If the UK cannot reach net carbon zero well ahead of 2050, it is unlikely that the rest of the world will do so.

Therefore, the UK must have much more ambitious targets and frontload the changes to policy and practices with clear binding milestones along the way.

The UK also recently dissolved its Department for International Development, cut its foreign aid budget, and introduced tighter...
immigration restrictions, signalling a significant shift away from its crucial commitments under the Paris Agreement. Now more than ever, governments like the UK must lead the way with radical change, end fossil fuel subsidies, and prioritise the rights of those marginalised politically, economically and socially - those least responsible and most vulnerable to the climate emergency.

NI CONTEXT

While on average the UK has reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 43% between 1990 and 2018, Northern Ireland lags way behind other regions with a decrease of only 20%.

Northern Ireland must be even more ambitious and radical in changing course, and frontloading can guarantee rapid progress. Fundamental to drastically reducing emissions in Northern Ireland is addressing our agriculture and transport sectors. The latest statistics show that as of 2018, not only were these the two largest contributors to greenhouse gas emissions (agriculture with 27% and transport with 23%), they were the only sectors failing to make sufficient progress on reductions (agriculture up 1% and transport up 29%) over the past three decades.

The Northern Ireland economy is heavily reliant on agriculture, but we must ensure progressive and managed change within the industry. Northern Ireland is also the only part of the UK where our land use, land-use change, and forestry sector is a net carbon source rather than a net sink.

The Alliance Green New Deal puts forward proposals to achieve nature-friendly farming that reduces emissions while protecting wildlife, biodiversity, and small farmers. Active travel and our public transport network have suffered from chronic underinvestment for years, which means we are hugely over-reliant on private car use. We must rebalance our infrastructure spending towards active and sustainable travel, with the Government leading and enabling change in light of the new ways we will work and live.

Emissions-heavy sectors with the biggest reductions were energy supply, waste management, and residential. These were driven by energy efficiency improvements, switching from coal to natural gas, and landfill management changes. These advances are welcome, but the Alliance Green New Deal shows we can do much more to accelerate their carbon neutrality transition.

This transition to carbon neutrality presents us with enormous job opportunities across existing and emerging industries. We want accessibility and employment rights to be at the heart of the new Green Economy.

The Alliance Green New Deal will ensure reskilling opportunities and new jobs are as wide-ranging and inclusive as possible by placing social dialogue at the heart of decision-making.

Our 2019 General Election Manifesto called for the creation of citizens assemblies to engage the public in tackling the climate emergency. We stand by this commitment and will prioritise the voices of the politically marginalised, including workers in affected industries, rural women, disabled people, Black and ethnic minority communities, and low-income groups.
THE GREEN ECONOMY

The new Green Economy must protect us and the planet. That’s why we are recognising skilled social care as essential infrastructure and investing in care jobs as green jobs for the future.

When developing policy, this holistic framework will force governments to consider the environment alongside our mental and physical wellbeing and financial security.

GREEN RECOVERY

We need a pandemic recovery that’s investment-driven and paves the way for a green transition.

Over a decade since the financial crisis of 2007-2008, it is clear that austerity measures fail to aid recovery and instead leave us more vulnerable to future crises.

In 2020 the UK economy suffered its sharpest GDP reduction in over 300 years – the worst annual economic decline in the G7. It is increasingly clear that the economy across the UK, and specifically in Northern Ireland, will not bounce back with a V-shaped economic recovery. On the back of a lost decade of austerity, we are likely to see considerable unemployment, sluggish growth, and worsening inequality.

In Northern Ireland specifically, low productivity and high economic inactivity have long characterised our economy. Investment in research and development and infrastructure has also been lower than in comparative regions.

A significant UK-wide economic stimulus and investment-led green recovery are required. Investment in the traditional drivers of economic growth, namely skills, research and development, and infrastructure, must be accelerated and considered through the lens of a green transition.

ECONOMIC POLICIES & DELIVERY

We want to create an economy that delivers for everyone.

The Alliance Green New Deal has a vision for a new Economic Strategy. One that guarantees sustainable and inclusive growth with particular attention paid to the regional and social balance of new job opportunities.

We will:
• Deliver a new Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland to address upskilling and retraining requirements and opportunities for the green economy.
• Develop a social enterprise strategy, underpinned by a Social Value Act for Northern Ireland, empowering us to enact social and economic change through procurement.
• Establish a Green Economy taskforce to inform the Government of crucial policy interventions, with membership including environmental and economic experts, representatives from trade unions, community groups, and local business organisations.
• Develop a Green Investment Unit for Invest NI to look at sustainability across all Invest NI projects and to attract green economy investments, including collaboration on skills and training.
• Invest in mechanisms such as City Deals and the network of further education colleges.
• Establish an Infrastructure Commission for Northern Ireland to boost the capacity and capability of the Civil Service, enabling projects to proceed on budget and on time.
• Recognise local businesses through a Charter Mark for Zero Carbon.

JOB CREATION

We want a job-rich, low-carbon, worker-led transformation.

From childcare workers to engineers, technicians to adult care workers, solar installers to building retrofitters, car manufacturers to environmental enforcement – the Alliance Green New Deal will pave the way for thousands of new jobs across Northern Ireland and will ensure all of us benefit from a new green economy.

Cumulatively, our proposals could create over 50,000 new jobs over this decade. Significant areas of potential increased employment and new jobs include:
• The roll-out of advanced broadband and digital infrastructure.
• Environmental governance, auditing, and monitoring requirements.
• Education and training infrastructure.
• The caring economy, from childcare to adult social care.
• Green economy research and development.
• Manufacturing of green technologies.
• Retrofitting of housing for renewable energy sources and insulation.
• Renewable energy and broader transmission infrastructure.
• Heat pump installation.
• Rail construction and rail network expansion.
• Electric and hydrogen bus manufacturing.
• Installation, maintenance, and upgrade of new technology and infrastructure such as electric vehicle charging points.
• Afforestation and the protection and development of biodiversity.
• Tourist opportunities linked to a green Northern Ireland.

We need a new economy that prioritises access for all and the wellbeing of our people and our planet.

The Alliance Green New Deal aims to make Northern Ireland one of the most innovative, inclusive and sustainable regional economies in Europe.

In Northern Ireland, we have the resources to build a thriving, secure Green Economy. We have a resourceful business base; a skilled, adaptable workforce; a driven, youthful population; a powerful manufacturing base; excellent research and innovation attributes; a robust telecommunications network; unmatched international links; and unique natural and cultural resources.

Therefore, the Green Economy can provide new and sustainable means of driving economic growth.

To do this, we must radically invest, adapt and modernise, building on what made us prosperous in the past and harnessing the creativity and funding needed to create a thriving and equitable decarbonised economy.

Gross domestic product (GDP) growth, which measures the market value of goods and services each year, has long determined a country’s economic success.

However, it fails to consider:
• Whether such goods and services lead to environmental degradation.
• Where such goods damage our health.
• The quality of services sold.
• How wealth is distributed amongst citizens.

A 2020 report by the OECD warns that current economic growth patterns are causing “significant harms”, including “rising inequality and catastrophic environmental degradation”. The report urges governments to radically shift economic policy, prioritising environmental sustainability, economic resilience, and reducing inequality.
SKILLS FOR THE FUTURE

We will prioritise a vast, diverse range of reskilling opportunities, with financial support to ensure equitable access.

Just 20 years ago, many of the jobs today didn’t exist. Many of us change jobs and careers several times throughout our lives, and this trend is likely to accelerate.

The Alliance Green New Deal would create a new Skills Strategy for Northern Ireland.

Our Skills Strategy will ensure everyone’s access to opportunities, regardless of gender, age, disability, socioeconomic, and ethnic background. This includes providing new and emerging opportunities for people starting their careers and those who wish to retrain.

Skills are currently delivered through universities, further education colleges, and private sector providers, alongside ongoing training and development in the workplace. The greatest pressures in a green transition will likely focus on intermediate technical and professional skills at Levels 4 and 5.

Therefore, a new Skills Strategy will deliver increased opportunities through a reformed, employer-driven apprenticeship system, in addition to programmes to address unemployment, especially for young people.

New skills interventions should:

• Develop employer-led green apprenticeship and traineeship opportunities for all ages and educational/employment backgrounds.
• Consider wage subsidies for green apprenticeships in certified areas.
• Incentivise employment within wage subsidy-based employment schemes, including a NI equivalent of Kickstart, through the introduction of a green economy weighting.
• Create a dedicated green economy retraining allowance, open to every adult wishing to access new green employment opportunities.
• Create targeted bursaries for under-represented groups in the labour market to access new and emerging industries, including disabled people, people of ethnic minority backgrounds, care leavers, etc.
• Audit profile of courses in higher and further education to ensure sufficient provision of a skills pipeline and that sustainability considerations are embedded where appropriate.
• Intensify support for STEM in higher education and further education.
• Promote women in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics), with targets to have at least 30% representation by 2030.
• Conduct a review of Vocational, Professional and Technical Qualifications.
• Ensure Green Economy opportunities are embedded into Careers Advice.
• Utilise early warnings of redundancies to assess retraining requirements and match new opportunities.
• Provide a green skills challenge fund into which employers can make bids for financial support.

RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

We will ramp up investment in research and development (R&D) to ensure Northern Ireland is a leader in green opportunities and innovation.

Northern Ireland has a robust existing R&D infrastructure involving universities, further education colleges, and science parks.

Nevertheless, additional investment in R&D will be crucial in developing the green economy and new jobs.

Particular opportunities lie in:

• Renewable energy.
• Hydrogen development and deployment.
• Green aerospace.
• Battery technology.
• Food and agriculture.
• Smart materials.
• Digital technology.

In addition to increased funding from within the Block Grant, we should explore other innovative funding sources, including City Deals and maximising drawdowns from EU Programmes such as Horizon Europe.

We, therefore, must develop the NI Contact Network to overcome the separation arising from Brexit. There should also be the provision of a green R&D Challenge Fund into which employers can make bids for financial support.

Alliance will advocate for increased resourcing of UK research councils and other programmes, and seek guarantees of more equitable funding across the UK. We must also maximise all-island research collaboration.

EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

A precarious job market can no longer exploit workers – we will put employment rights at the heart of the new green economy.

Pre-Covid-19, the gig economy was an increasing feature of the UK’s employment landscape.

The pandemic has laid bare the injustices faced by those working in this insecure employment, which we know disproportionately affects younger people and Black and minority ethnic workers.

Alliance has long called for regulation in the gig economy because every worker deserves to be treated with dignity and have financial independence.

A spotlight has also been placed on issues in the childcare system. Moving to a green society and economy in which everyone can participate requires universal, child-centred childcare to meet families’ and providers’ needs.

The past year has presented some potential virtuous benefits for addressing climate change: we know that greater home working levels are possible and preferable for many.

We must preserve new-found flexibilities for those who want them. In turn, these trends pose fresh challenges for employment law to ensure that changing patterns of work do not create new forms of exploitation.
The Alliance Green New Deal would:

- Eliminate zero-hour contracts and introduce robust regulation of the gig economy.
- Review and strengthen rights to flexible and at-home working and protections for those in that context.
- Encourage condensed hours by employers for those wishing to avail, where it is practical to do so.
- Introduce a universal childcare system to meet the needs of families, subsidised by Government and centred on the child, ensuring that women and low-income families can fully participate in the new Green Economy.
- Bring in regulations on mandatory gender and ethnicity pay gap reporting for all employers with more than 50 employees, including a duty to produce an action plan.
- Apply conditions to big-business bailouts to safeguard workers and accelerate decarbonisation.
- Ban companies from “fire and rehire” practices which have increased during the pandemic.
- Introduce additional and tailored support to sectors most impacted by wage floor increases, including considering a temporary reduction or rebalancing of employer National Insurance contributions.
- Introduce mandatory worker representation on company boards above an established threshold and remuneration committees.

Migrant Workers’ Rights

The lack of rights for migrants in the UK puts untold numbers at risk of modern slavery, human trafficking and exploitation in the informal economy. In line with Alliance’s longstanding commitment to migrants’ rights, our Green New Deal calls for urgent measures so that everyone in Northern Ireland can live and work in dignity, including:

- Advocate for a complete overhaul of the Home Office, ending punitive policies which put people at risk of poverty, exploitation, and modern slavery, such as No Recourse to Public Funds and the new points-based system.
- Continue to campaign for automatic status for EEA citizens post-Brexit.
- Grant asylum seekers the right to work so they can support themselves and their families and become active members of their communities.
- End employer-dependent visas so workers can change jobs or leave an exploitative employer.
- Grant overseas students two years to find work after graduation.
- Decriminalise undocumented working for migrants and protect undocumented workplace whistleblowers so that migrants are safe from abuse and exploitation in the informal economy.
- Abolish restrictions on working, opening bank accounts, and getting driving licenses.
FUNDING A GREEN RECOVERY

Across the public and private sectors, there are pathways to finance the Green New Deal.

The recovery from the pandemic will not be straightforward or automatic. To do this and make our new green economy become a reality, the UK Government and NI Executive must radically change their approaches to spending and taxation.

In keeping with other countries worldwide, the UK should be undertaking a significant economic stimulus that can be readily managed thanks to low interest rates.

For context, the Institute for Public Policy Research (IPPR) puts the equivalent of the Biden Administration’s Covid-relief stimulus at approximately eight per cent of UK GDP and £190 billion in value. Currently, the UK Government allocates just over half of this for this financial year.

There is also an unnecessary obsession around keeping national debt levels below 100 per cent of the value of GDP, which has been exceeded in other times in UK history. It is simply unnecessary for the UK Government to squeeze public finances so quickly.

From the International Monetary Fund (IMF) to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), there is consensus among global experts for an investment-led, green recovery that can be sustained through Government borrowing.

According to the IMF’s Fiscal Monitor 2020, “Before the COVID-19 crisis, public-investment-to-GDP ratios were already declining and the growth in infrastructure had not kept up with needs.

In advanced and some emerging market economies, where interest rates are near zero and the growth in infrastructure had not kept up with needs.

Funding a green recovery is essential at a local level. As we emerge from the pandemic, we must acknowledge and support those businesses that have suffered the most.

As such, a fundamental review of the rating system should be conducted by the NI Assembly to improve its fairness and ensure a business-friendly environment that is conducive to economic recovery.

These changes to economic growth and tax mean that we can all proportionately benefit from a green economy.

The Alliance Green New Deal, therefore, calls for:

• Rebalancing of the tax system from taxation on income to taxation on wealth, including equity between capital gains and dividend tax rates with income tax rates.
• Increasing the tax-free allowance for income tax so that lower-earners keep more of what they earn.
• Introducing a tax on all fossil fuel companies’ emissions, including imports and domestic extraction and imported energy.
• Ending de-facto subsidies to the fossil fuel industry and the divestment of local government pension funds from fossil fuels.
• Conducting an independent review of the non-domestic rating (business rates) system to ensure fairness.
• Providing a more comprehensive range of VAT exemptions, including zero-rating sanitary products and sunscreen, and lower rates for hospitality and housing renovation.
• Reviewing current tax relief schemes to ensure they meet their intended purpose and are not being exploited.
• Introducing a General Anti-Avoidance Rule, setting an HMRC target to reduce the tax gap.
• Strengthening the enforcement of and penalties for tax evasion.

We also call for urgent legislation to tackle international tax-dodging, which harms the economies of both the UK and low and lower middle income countries including:

• The creation of a register requiring the publication of company ownership information in the UK’s Overseas Territories and Crown Dependencies.
• A requirement for non-domestic companies to pay tax on those profits generated from within the UK.
• The introduction of an international Financial Transactions Tax and, at a UK-wide level, retaining the banking levy.

NI COST OF DIVISION

We spend too much on duplication that keeps us divided - reform will help us build a better future and allow us to do more to sustain a Green New Deal.

Twenty-three years on from the Good Friday Agreement, we still remain a largely segregated society. Our divided society stifles our progress and sustains sectarianism, with direct and indirect consequences – from violence at interface areas to lost foreign direct investment opportunities.

A divided society also costs more to run. Research commissioned by the Department of Finance in 2015 estimates that the cost of division amounts to at least half a billion pounds each year.

The Alliance Green New Deal will therefore press for the Executive to take the following actions to ensure that the cost of division is more accurately quantified and factored into decision making:

• Acknowledge the financial and other cost implications of division, and commit to...
presenting a practical and costed plan to
tackle these issues immediately and embed
these plans in the next Programme for
Government and Budget.

- Mandate all Departments to conduct
formal audits of their budgets, publish their
assessment of the impact of societal
division and develop a plan to reduce it.

- Require all Departments to actively
encourage de-segregation and promote
cohesion, sharing, and integration within
their policies and spending plans, including
clear deliverables in the form of the
expansion of shared housing and
integrated education.

- Ensure that the Fiscal Council has a role in
independently monitoring and reporting on
the Cost of Division and impacting the
current and future financial position, and
more widely ensure that there is an
evidence-based approach to public
expenditure.

Savings from addressing the costs of
managing a divided society can be reinvested
in improving public services and investing in
economic change, including the Green New
Deal.

PERSONAL INCOME

The UK social security system needs an
urgent overhaul – we want a simplified
system based on dignity for all.

Urgent changes to the social security system
are long overdue and will provide a
meaningful start to addressing poverty and
ensuring a just society for all.

The Government is willing to waste billions yet
refuses to provide support for those who need it.
They unjustly pursue individuals for benefits
fraud yet facilitate and indulge cronies
while continuing to tolerate large-scale tax
avoidance by large companies and the
super-rich. We do not accept the logic that we
cannot afford a more generous welfare system
for those who need it.

We’re calling for a full review of the UK
welfare system, preferably by a Royal
Commission or panel of experts, including the
option of a Universal Basic Income, with
Northern Ireland potentially providing a trial.

This review should be based on the principles
of dignity for all, support for those who need it,
simplicity for the claimants, eradicating
poverty, and ensuring meaningful pathways to
work.

The Alliance Green New Deal also demands
that the Government:

- Conduct urgent root and branch reform of
the UK-wide welfare system, repealing
cruel measures such as the bedroom tax,
benefits cap, two-child limit and six-month
rule.
- Extend the welfare mitigations for Northern
Ireland as an interim step.
- End punitive sanctions and replace them
with an incentive-based system.
- Reduce the five-week wait for the first
Universal Credit payment and offer an
interim grant.
- End outsourced medical assessments for
welfare and repetitive assessments for
people with lifelong, permanent or
deteriorating conditions.
- Create a wide range of opportunities for
claimants to reskill or retrain, where
appropriate.
- Increase Universal Credit, Carers
Allowance, Statutory Maternity Pay and
Statutory Sick Pay.
- Expand the scope of the National Living
Wage to cover workers aged 21 and over
and simplify the system by introducing a
Youth Minimum Wage and abolishing both
the apprentice minimum wage and the
various age rates.
- Support minimum wage equality for young
people and conduct a review into minimum
and living wage standardisation across age
groups
- Expand free childcare provision and create
a childcare system that is affordable,
accessible, flexible, high quality, and
supports children’s education and
development and helps parents into
employment.
- Protect migrant workers from poverty,
exploitation and modern slavery by
providing recourse to public funds and
housing.
The public deserve better – we should no longer accept the status quo.

For too long, our public services and economy have been held back by a dereliction of leadership and communciation breakdown by the two largest parties in the Executive.

The situation is stifling social cohesion, damaging our communities and our young people’s prospects.

A system whereby the two largest parties can veto the creation of a cross-community government further reinforces the need for reform to permit a voluntary coalition to be established.

Northern Ireland has never consisted of only two communities. It’s time we had a political system that reflects today’s open, progressive and diverse society.

The Starting Point – Governance

To implement the Alliance Green New Deal, we need to work together as a society. Therefore, we must first eliminate bad governance and embed cross-Departmental cooperation. Some of the commitments we will implement include:

- Replacing the current cross-community voting system with a weighted majority system free from designations.
- Legislating for mandatory publication of party political donations backdated from 2014 so the public knows who is funding each political party.
- Ensuring the implementation of commitments within New Decade New Approach on good governance, including establishing an independent Environmental Protection Agency.
- Creating statutory duties to ensure cross-departmental, ministerial and civil service cooperation.
- Establishing citizens’ assemblies and integrating community dialogue to ensure that the politically marginalised are central to the new green economy and society.

Climate Action Policy

The Alliance Green New Deal would see Northern Ireland lead the way with its ambition by putting a just transition at the heart of our legislative process and civil service.

We will do this by:

- Creating a new Northern Ireland Executive Department for Energy and Climate Change to take overarching responsibility for tackling the climate emergency locally, ensuring leadership on these issues, and restoring public confidence in green energy initiatives, with a refocused DAERA concentrating on agriculture, rural affairs and other environmental issues.
- Establishing an independent Environmental Protection Agency for Northern Ireland to govern environmental protection – an outstanding New Decade New Approach commitment.
- Delivering a Northern Ireland Climate Change Act.
- Introducing a dedicated Environment Act for Northern Ireland to go further than the weak UK Environment Bill.
- Establishing an Economic Strategy which will support clean and inclusive growth and create sustainable jobs for the future.
- Playing a leadership role in international efforts to combat climate change and demonstrate our commitment to the Paris Agreement of 2015, by radically reducing emissions from the Northern Ireland economy.
- Legislating for carbon-neutral local Government and incentivising renewables.

All-Island Cooperation

Climate Change doesn’t respect borders and boundaries. Tackling the climate emergency requires global collective action, and bilateral cooperation between the UK and Ireland is crucial.

In particular, the Alliance Green New Deal will prioritise close cooperation between the Northern Ireland Executive and Irish Government in an all-island context.

Working together on areas such as agriculture, transport, and energy also present huge opportunities to streamline and create services that better reflect how we live and work.

Areas for all-island cooperation include:

- Implementing the second North-South Interconnector and further development of the integrated single electricity market to maximise the use of renewables while improving energy security and keeping prices competitive.
- Developing all-island transport connectivity, including high-speed rail between Belfast and Dublin, and onto Cork and Limerick.
- Enhancing all-island research and development collaboration, in particular using potential economies of scale to sustain large-scale projects.
- Coordinating agriculture and biodiversity policies.

UK Government

We want a Green New Deal at the heart of the UK Government.

At the 2021 United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) in November, the decisions made by participating countries will define our future: emissions must fall by at least half by 2030, and net-zero emissions must be reached no later than 2050 to achieve the 1.5°C goal.

Ahead of its presidency of COP26, the UK Government pledged at the end of 2020 to reduce emissions by at least 68% by 2030 and end taxpayer support for fossil fuel projects overseas.

These de-facto subsidies need to be abolished immediately. Alliance is lobbying the UK Government to ensure it paves the most ambitious path possible for other governments in November.

We also support:

- The creation of a new dedicated government department to oversee climate change policy.
- The creation of a Minister for Future Generations and a Future Generations Act modelled on the current Act for Wales, putting our young people and future generations at the heart of every government decision.
- An increased focus on the concept of human security as defined by the UN Development Programme.
- An inter-departmental approach to meeting, and where possible, exceeding commitments in the 2015 Paris Agreement.
- Working to ensure that the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals are fully implemented by 2030.
- Changing the voting age to 16 so that those most impacted by the climate emergency can have their say.
- Establishing citizens’ assemblies to work alongside the Government, under the Parliament’s scrutiny, to inspect policies tackling the climate emergency and make recommendations.
We need clean, accessible transport that works for our communities, our environment, and our economy.

Public Transport
Chronic under-investment in public transport has created a highly car-dependent society in Northern Ireland.

Significant infrastructure investment is vital for a clean, sustainable transport system that works for everyone. As well as drastically reducing emissions, investment will create meaningful modal change, support equal opportunities, reduce social exclusion and break down the socioeconomic transport divide.

The Alliance Green New Deal would create an Infrastructure Commission with a thirty-year vision to prioritise and report on infrastructure projects.

A medium-term strategy to modify and reprioritise projects will also be required as investment in sustainable and active travel infrastructure versus roads needs to be radically accelerated and rebalanced. This will necessitate reviewing some road-widening projects currently listed by the Department for Infrastructure.

Despite proportionally lower investment than elsewhere in the UK, the recent introduction of the Glider network and new NI railways fleet highlight what investment in public transport can achieve, with passenger numbers rising pre-pandemic.

While future working arrangements and commuting habits are not certain, it is clear that there will be no return to the pre-pandemic status quo.

The Alliance Green New Deal would prioritise making public transport safe to use and incentivise passengers to return. We would lead change in how and when we travel and work; enabling more remote working spaces in towns; encouraging staggered start and finish times to reduce morning and evening peak commuting periods; introducing public transport pricing arrangements that recognise the five-day commute will reduce.

We should make our transport system as green as anywhere in the world. To do this, we will:

- Conduct a review on extending Northern Ireland Concessionary Fares System to include consideration of providing full concessionary fares to those with a disability currently eligible for Half Fare SmartPass, and increasing the age to which half-fares are available for children and young people from 16 to 22 as part of wider Public Transport Recovery Plans.
- Create additional electric and hydrogen bus manufacturing jobs by investing in sustainable public transport such as electric and hydrogen buses.
- Provide the ability to pay using credit and debit cards for bus and rail travel with caps incentivising regular and multi-modal travel.

Average distance travelled per person per year by mode of transport.

Source: Northern Ireland Carbon Intensity Indicators 2020, NISRA.
• Invest in local bus networks that better reflect how we live and work, including at an all-island level.
• Invest in Belfast-Dublin high-speed rail, with branches to Derry-Londonderry and Cork.
• Support an hourly Belfast-Dublin rail service in the near future.
• Deliver the electrification of the Northern Ireland Railways network.
• Invest in rail construction jobs by committing to and building on Translink’s 5-year plan for rail investment alongside a fresh review of the Railway Investment Prioritisation Strategy.
• Commission feasibility studies, where appropriate, to explore further expansion of the rail network along previously closed lines, including Portadown to Armagh and Knockmore to Antrim.
• Establish binding green conditions on new road infrastructure to encourage public transport, better materials and offsetting emissions via rewilding initiatives.
• Cross-border collaboration on important infrastructure projects, creating sustainable transport links and jobs for the future, including the Ulster Canal, the Narrow Water Bridge, and cross-border Greenways.
• Focus on addressing road safety concerns in considering future roads projects, such as A1 Phase 2 Junctions Improvement, addressing air quality concerns, under-investment West of the Bann, and connectivity concerns such as collaborative working with Scottish Government to upgrade A75 and A77, and complying with legally binding emissions targets.
• Action the Barton Review into Structural Maintenance Funding Requirements to ensure that the current network is fit for purpose.

Active Travel
We must rapidly ensure that walking and cycling are accessible and safe across Northern Ireland. To accelerate the move to active travel, the Alliance Green New Deal will:
• Significantly increase spend per capita on active travel, with £10 per person on cycling by 2025 at the latest instead of the average spend of less than £2.
• Deliver the Bicycle Strategy for Northern Ireland and the Greenway Strategy, focusing on urban and rural areas across NI.
• Create an independent Active Travel Commissioner for Northern Ireland with a specific, ring-fenced budget to deliver upon the above strategies, underpinned by obligations set out in an Active Travel Bill.
• Prioritise cycling infrastructure across NI such as cycle lanes, greenways and storage, in part by incentivising local councils to bring forward schemes.
• Invest in new rural or city road improvements such as footpath repair and lighting to include safe, active travel options.
• Encourage active travel through marketing campaigns.
• Significantly increase the number of school children participating in the Active Schools Travel Programme and Cycling Proficiency Scheme.
• Support the further roll-out of 20mph school zones across Northern Ireland to encourage road safety, give local councils the power to lower speed limits in their areas, and support the trial of wider 20mph zones as has been seen in Wales.
• Publish a new, more ambitious Road Safety Strategy that protects all road users, including pedestrians.
• Support people who choose to cycle with education, training, ‘Cycle to Work’ schemes and ‘Fix your Bike’ vouchers.
• Require local councils to develop local transport plans as part of their community planning function with targets to decrease the percentage of journeys by a private car while addressing a historically inadequate provision in rural areas.

Private Vehicles
Over 70% of all journeys in Northern Ireland are by car, rising to 87% for trips of one mile or over.
In 2020 the UK Government made a welcome announcement that it will phase out the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2030, with all new cars and vans being fully zero-emission at the tailpipe from 2035. Currently, just over 0.3% of NI’s licensed vehicles are ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs).
We need to facilitate this transition by prioritising charging infrastructure urgently. Once market-leading, our current charging network lags behind the rest of the UK and Ireland, with a significant proportion of our current public charge points no longer operational. A reinvigorated charging network and renewable fuel sector will also support the decarbonisation of public transport and freight travel, including ferries and aviation.

The Alliance Green New Deal will:
• Follow Scotland’s lead in providing interest-free loans of up to £35,000 spread over six years towards the cost of an electric vehicle which could be used on top of the OLEV plug-in grant scheme.

Licensed ultra-low emission vehicles (ULEVs) at the end of 2020 Q2, by body type and region, United Kingdom.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>All Cars</th>
<th>All Motorcycles</th>
<th>Goods Vehicles</th>
<th>HGV</th>
<th>Buses &amp; Coaches</th>
<th>Other Vehicles</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>England</td>
<td>263,625</td>
<td>3,121</td>
<td>11,278</td>
<td>334</td>
<td>649</td>
<td>4,581</td>
<td>283,588</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wales</td>
<td>6,108</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>6,626</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scotland</td>
<td>17,081</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>745</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>18,277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NI</td>
<td>3,511</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3,673</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Aviation
Air travel is an indisputable contributor to carbon emissions, and Governments can and must act to reform the industry. As a small island, we will continue to rely on flights much more than Great Britain and the rest of Europe. We must ensure that the UK Government acts robustly and leads the way in reducing air travel while respecting the need to uphold connectivity for outlying parts of the UK, especially recognising our unique position in Northern Ireland.

The Alliance Green New Deal will:
- Support the reform of Air Passenger Duty, so those who fly the most pay more, shifting the burden onto those with the largest carbon footprint without removing access to flights for those with limited alternatives or resources.
- Push the UK Government to ensure all funds raised in reducing emissions are invested in green initiatives.
- Promote the innovation and development of green aviation technologies and an associated manufacturing capacity.
- Introduce a zero-carbon fuels blending requirement for domestic flights.
- Set green conditions for airline bailouts, including net-zero carbon emissions by a specific date with interim targets and a plan to deliver. If airlines fail to meet these conditions, bailout funding would be converted to equity so that the taxpayer could own a stake.
- Invest through our universities and manufacturers in the development of zero-carbon aviation technologies, including the development and scaling up of potential electric.
- Encourage the use of technology to minimise the need for business travel.

ENERGY

We must unlock NI’s potential for a bright and clean energy future.

Energy is central to all our lives, but to tackle the climate emergency and protect our environment for ourselves and future generations, we must leave the old ways of producing electricity and heat behind. Northern Ireland has had notable success in recent years in renewable generation, surpassing, by a considerable margin, its 40% renewables target for 2020, setting up community energy initiatives and supporting innovative generation research projects. However, we can and must go further. Alliance believes that Northern Ireland can be an ambitious world leader in energy efficiency and clean, net-zero technologies. These will help us tackle the climate emergency and improve people’s living standards across Northern Ireland, with cleaner air, warmer and more efficient homes, and stable and affordable energy prices.

Effective Governance
For too long, Energy and Climate Change policy in Northern Ireland has lacked ambition, direction and joined-up action. We have seen energy schemes waste public money through poor design and a lack of proper oversight in the past. We must build on pioneering community energy initiatives that have brought environmental, social and economic benefits and restore public confidence in energy schemes.

Therefore, the Alliance Green New Deal will urgently establish a single Department of Energy and Climate Change. This Department will tackle problems by:
- Having a single Minister to champion energy and climate change issues at the Executive Table.
- Developing the proper oversight, expertise and administrative capacity to efficiently design and monitor clean energy schemes.
- Directing policy and implementation of energy generation and efficiency schemes through a single Executive department.
- Ensuring the integration of an Energy Strategy and Climate Change commitments across Executive Departments with clear, legally binding provisions for cross-departmental cooperation through a ‘Climate Champion’.
- Promoting citizen engagement and empowerment in energy demand reduction, generation and supply, and actively encouraging changes to reduce energy use and Northern Ireland’s carbon footprint.

We would also establish an independent energy commission for Northern Ireland to provide expert advice and recommendations to the Assembly and Executive on the pathway to zero-carbon energy and scrutinise progress.

Energy Policies
The Alliance Green New Deal has huge ambitions for the new department. Our energy policies will:
- Set ambitious targets for 80% renewable electricity generation by 2030; and 95% renewable electricity generation by 2035, recognising challenges in regards to storage and ensuring stable supply for Northern Ireland.
- Require all Northern Ireland Departments to consider climate and the energy transition in policy development, to ensure all of Government is working together towards our zero-carbon energy future, and maximising interventions to reach this goal.
- Implement an immediate statutory ban on all current and future fossil fuel exploration, including fracking, leaving the energy sources of yesterday in the ground.
- Prioritise the passage of planning applications that propose increasing the renewable energy capacity of Northern Ireland.
- Introduce comprehensive support and incentives for renewable generation which would include:
  - Supporting energy cooperatives, which have been successful in places like Denmark, where 90% of wind turbines are cooperatively owned.
  - Delivering a fit for purpose renewable electricity generation support scheme that promotes new capacity and delivers value for money to consumers.
  - Promoting microgeneration for businesses and homes via improved technical and financial support and routes to market for small scale generation, including solar and wind installations.
  - Encouraging community energy projects recognising the need for urgent action as other jurisdictions are considerably ahead with a 2GW target for Scotland by 2030. This includes supporting a single community energy organisation to guide projects and comprehensive financial support similar to the CARES and RESS Schemes in Scotland and the Republic of Ireland.
- Identifying and promoting opportunities for partnership working with public, private and non-profit organisations, including the potential for asset transfer and asset locks where appropriate.
- Ensuring that Northern Ireland develops off-shore wind installations to their potential, to gain the benefits of reliable, large energy production closer to population centres and transmission networks.
- Develop a Solar Energy Scheme to provide grants for private rooftop and ground-based photovoltaics to ensure that a more significant share of our electricity needs is met through solar power.
- Fund necessary investment in the grid, including the second North-South Interconnector and other cross-border interconnection projects with Great Britain and France, to further develop the integrated Single Electricity Market to its full potential, ensure security of supply, stabilise prices, and quickly bring new renewables online.
- Invest in making Northern Ireland a world-leader in emerging hydrogen technologies, promoting innovative projects producing hydrogen gas and alternative blends, and researching how it can play a part in meeting challenges with energy storage, home heating and transport.
- Resource in research and development and utilising our local university expertise regarding strategic future energy challenges such as energy storage, geothermal projects, carbon capture, storage and use, district heating solutions, and off-shore technologies.

**PLANNING & HOUSING**

**We will retrofit housing to abolish fuel poverty and legislate, so the construction sector builds long-life, green projects.**

The gas network in Northern Ireland is not as extensive as in Great Britain, and around three-quarters of homes in Northern Ireland are heated by oil or electric sources. Some pathways to decarbonise heat that rely on modifying the gas network may be less suitable for Northern Ireland. Still, we can make significant savings in many properties by switching conventional oil boilers to heat pumps. An intergovernmental response is required to tackle residential emissions, meaning we must engage the Department for Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (Climate Change), Department of Finance (building regulations and procurement), Department for Infrastructure (planning and transport), Department for Communities (housing policy and urban regeneration) and all local councils.

**New Retrofitting Programme**

Retrofitting is a fundamental component of decarbonising the residential sector, building healthy homes and abolishing energy poverty. The Alliance Green New Deal will develop an ambitious retrofitting programme with implementation by 2030, which will:

- Ensure the retrofitting of all social housing for renewable energy sources and insulation, creating many new jobs.
- Introduce universal access to grants, loans and advice from a single authority for insulating and future-proofing our housing stock.
- Expand grant programs to encourage retrofitting of older homes, whether rental or owned.
- Make retrofitting Government and civic buildings a mandatory requirement.
- Encourage clusters of communities to sign up to retrofit programmes.
- Promote and offset costs for air and ground-source heat pumps, high-efficiency boilers, and other low or zero-emission technologies for the rapid decarbonisation of domestic heating.
- Roll out smart meters to electricity consumers, as has been widely done in Great Britain.
- Reform building regulations with nearly zero-energy buildings (NZEB); retrofitting grants; post-occupancy reviews; and requirements for new builds to sustain 100 years minimum.
- Housing fitness standards to drive retrofit in the rental sector, a win/win for both tenant and landlord.

The Alliance Green New Deal will also prioritise fundamental changes to planning, housing and construction. We will:

- Assist local councils in preparing their Local Development Plans, ensuring consistency with the Regional Development Strategy and encouraging a healthy density of socially mixed and inclusive housing based around the needs of communities and the environment.
- Ensure new developments are better connected for active travel and reduce travel emissions via developer contributions as required.
- Permit development rights for green energy infrastructure, following the example of electric car charging points.
- Provide grants or loans for new builds incentive, with loans repayment linked to energy savings.
- Require new builds to make provision for electric vehicle charging and active travel.
- Promote the proper roll-out of Net-Zero Emissions Building requirements, including technical booklets to assist architects and the construction sector, moving towards Net-Zero Carbon.
- Support the construction sector’s decarbonisation through renewable sources of heat, power, and materials in the building process.
- Provide funding to support carbon-neutral passive housing projects and tiny house communities and encourage further carbon-neutral developments.
- Expand grant support to encourage repair and regeneration of Listed Buildings.
- Improve the reliability and quality assurance processes surrounding Energy Performance Certificates, exploring how rates can be used to incentivise EPC improvements, and raising the required standards for the private rental sector.
- Rewild urban residential areas to reduce air pollution and enhance our biodiversity.
- Ensure no reckless destruction by planning decisions in areas of outstanding natural beauty and national parks.
- Put in measures to ensure statutory consultees in the planning process are correctly resourced so that 21-day response deadlines are met to consider critical environmental considerations.
- Reform the Pre-Application Community Consultation process, including a tighter timeframe and provision for physical and virtual consultations.
Care work is essential, skilled work that deserves to be well paid, secure and valued.

The past year has highlighted that the infrastructure holding our society and economy together includes much more than transport, energy and construction. It has also demonstrated the tireless, skilled yet undervalued work of our social care workforce.

From childcare providers and adult care workers to our own family members, we all rely on care throughout our lives, and it’s time to redefine its role in our economy.

This sector is low-carbon and benefits people and the planet, with the potential to create many thousands of jobs across Northern Ireland. Social care jobs are therefore green jobs.

We know that this work is mainly done by women, including migrant women, and is hugely under-recognised and under-paid – if it’s paid at all.

In 2011, over 210,000 people in Northern Ireland identified as unpaid carers. That means almost 15% of our workforce are trying to balance work and care, and Carers NI estimates that by 2037 the number of carers could double to 400,000.

Investing in Social Care

The first step is competitive pay and conditions, and meaningful pay progression. The UK Government has recently committed to a long-term solution to low income in England, which, if introduced, would result in extra funding in Northern Ireland.

In Westminster, we will push for this solution to include a basis for continued rises in pay above and beyond increases to the National Minimum Wage and in line with increases given to NHS staff.

Our social care workforce needs a meaningful career path with:

- Better opportunities for entry into the profession.
- Career progression for existing social care.
- Proper training opportunities.
- Professional recognition.

Working conditions in Social Care also must change. For that reason, we want to continue to fight for the elimination of zero-hour contracts in Northern Ireland.

In Westminster, we will keep fighting for an increase in Statutory Sick Pay and Carers Allowance.

Finally, we must ensure that investing in green jobs of the future includes social care, with:

- A universal, affordable childcare system, subsidised by Government and centred on the child, creating new jobs and ensuring that women and low-income families can fully participate in the new Green Economy.
- Thousands of adult care opportunities, so that 1 in 8 of us no longer need to provide unpaid care with little to no support.
AGRICULTURE

We will work alongside farmers to build a sustainable farming system that tackles both the climate and wildlife crises while producing quality food.

Our farmers play an essential role in driving nature’s recovery, and matters like cattle grazing and hedgerow maintenance are critical to protecting our wildlife and biodiversity.

Across Ireland, climate and soil mean we depend on a grass-based industry. Permanent grass and trees are crucial for carbon sequestration.

Nevertheless, much can and must be done to make the industry more sustainable.

Nearly 30% of NI’s greenhouse gas emissions are from agriculture, compared to 10% in the rest of the UK. This reflects the importance of agriculture to our economy. Our farming sector is also much more heavily livestock-based, and it is likely to remain so.

With around 25,000 farms in Northern Ireland, most of which are small and family-run, the Alliance Green New Deal will support our farmers in embracing environmentally beneficial farming practices, reducing their carbon footprint, and better using and protecting natural resources and biodiversity.

Carbon Audits for NI Farms

The Alliance Green New Deal’s starting point for agriculture will be fully funded carbon audits of farms. Audits will assess where performance improvements and savings can be made, as farms with a low carbon footprint are often the most efficient and profitable. Audits will occur every five years and be conducted by consultants approved by NIEA or an independent Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

They will identify the best techniques to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases and prove how much carbon is being stored in farmland, taking account of the mix of enterprises on each farm.

Audits would be required for future eligibility for government funding. Financial support will also be dependent on emissions reduction and increased carbon sequestration.

As well as implementing audits, we will:
- Introduce an Agriculture Act for Northern Ireland to include bespoke policies relevant to the sector.
- Enable the sector to tackle ammonia emissions by bringing forward a scheme to ensure anaerobic digesters are utilised and do not encourage food waste. The scheme will promote the purchase of anaerobic digesters and provide funding for vapogant digestate evaporators to help reduce ammonia emissions.
- Continue support for research on ruminant diets to reduce methane emissions.
- Encourage the use of renewable energies such as battery-powered electric or hydrogen tractors and other farm vehicles charged by locally generated wind or solar.
- Facilitate combined application of both organic amendments and the reduction of chemical fertiliser, to be applied only where required as a sustainable tool for soil restoration.

Nature-Friendly farming will also be encouraged through:
- Expanding the Environmental Farming Scheme to promote habitat restoration, including linking areas of high value by wildlife corridors.
- Supporting land managers transition to alternative land uses, including help with skills, training, information and support with up-front costs and long-term payback of investing in alternative uses.
- Promoting biodiversity gains by assisting the planting of trees, hedges, and other flora, the protection of existing trees and hedgerows, and the restoration and preservation of peat bogs.
- Reviewing assistance of farmers into diversification through new programmes such as agri-tourism.
- Promoting local, sustainable produce through investing in food markets and farm shops, putting local food producers at the heart of our communities.

NATURE & BIODIVERSITY

We face a climate and ecological crisis, and Northern Ireland’s unique natural environment is under significant threat.

Northern Ireland has about 8% tree cover, thought to be the lowest in Europe, and our forest coverage is around 40% lower than the UK average. Therefore, it’s hardly surprising that, unlike Great Britain, our land use, land-use change, and forestry sector is a net carbon source rather than a net sink.3 We can seize many cross-cutting environmental and economic opportunities, such as rewilding, to enable landowners and rural communities to diversify their income in areas where farming alone is no longer viable.

We need ambitious, long term plans and concrete actions to restore our damaged ecosystems. The Alliance Green New Deal will:
- Deliver an ambitious afforestation programme of native woodland species to increase Northern Ireland tree cover and achieve the current target of 12% cover by 2050 (approx. 2,000 hectares of trees a year) by a mixture of traditional forestry, agroforestry, orchards and amenity planting.
- Increase cross-border cooperation on the protection of the natural environment through the independent Environmental Protection Agency.
- Establish an effective future land management scheme to provide landowners with resources and tools to improve the natural environment.
- Set new ambitious, legally binding targets to protect our natural environment and drive the restoration of species and habitats.
- Establish alignment with international efforts and environmental cooperation, particularly on actions to tackle illegal and unsustainable trade in timber, wildlife, ivory, and fish.
- Make Northern Ireland supply chains deforestation-free by 2023, including requiring NI businesses to demonstrate complete transparency to ensure consumers no longer contribute to the destruction of vast swaths of forested land overseas.
- Ensure our protected areas on land and sea are managed effectively, moving towards creating a low carbon economy.
- Deliver a Peatland Conservation Programme, a strategic plan to support the climate mitigation plans through peatland and carbon stores conservation, restoration and improved management.
- Promote biodiversity initiatives across primary, post-primary and third-level sectors, and ensure that schools, colleges, and universities across the country play an active role in providing areas to promote biodiversity, including funding biodiversity degrees.
- Encourage a greater connection to nature through community engagement, including greater participation and encouragement of eco-schools and nature-focused community events.
- Create training opportunities and jobs for qualified vocational forest schools programmes and create additional woodland areas in our educational infrastructure so that all children have the opportunity to learn through an outdoor resource.
- Establishing more Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and supporting their management through increased resources and regulations to reduce overfishing, marine pollution and ocean acidification.
- Supporting the urgent ban of industrial fishing vessels such as supertrawlers from operating in UK MPAs.

We will:
- Do our share to protect wildlife and our rich biodiversity.
- Restore and protect our damaged ecosystems.
- Secure our natural capital and biodiversity.
- Work with land managers to support and protect our wildlife.
- Preserve our natural environment for future generations.
- Build a sustainable future for Northern Ireland.

We will do our share to protect our rich biodiversity and secure our natural capital. We will work with land managers to support and protect our wildlife, and work to preserve our natural environment for future generations. We will build a sustainable future for Northern Ireland.
WASTE MANAGEMENT

We will create a single focused waste management system that will reward recycling and end our overuse of waste to landfill.

The Alliance Green New Deal will implement an extensive review of the current waste management structures in Northern Ireland, including an urgent review of the existing residual waste capacity in landfill and incineration. We will reject any new waste management infrastructure proposals before this is completed.

In the UK, for food waste alone, a quarter of what is purchased is wasted every year, producing the equivalent of over 20 million tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions, costing over £20 billion.

To radically reduce emissions in waste management, the Alliance Green New Deal will:

• Introduce a Circular Economy Action Plan between the 11 councils in Northern Ireland.
• Establish a statutory waste recycling target of 70% in Northern Ireland by 2030.
• Extend separate food waste collections to 100% of homes by 2025.
• Strengthen domestic and commercial incentives to recycle and reduce waste sent to landfill and incineration.
• Consult on the introduction of an incineration levy in Northern Ireland.
• Make producers responsible for the waste they create and the total cost of recycling or disposal, encouraging more sustainable design and manufacturing.
• Roll out deposit return schemes for all food and drink bottles and containers.
• Reduce the number of waste management authorities to improve efficiency and consistency across the sector.
• Prioritise a plan to eliminate plastic pollution, including banning single-use plastic carrier bags by 2025.

We will additionally invest in sustainable local initiatives, such as:

• Clothes and toy banks in all local council areas to encourage the reuse of clothing, toys and school uniform exchanges.
• Repair cafes, mimicking EU ‘right to repair’ legislation to help small repair businesses and community groups combat ‘planned obsolescence’.
• Removing VAT on clothing repairs to incentivise reuse.
• Sponsoring local councils to recognise local environmental achievements for business and community.
As well as supporting legislation to tackle international tax dodging in Westminster, an Alliance Green New Deal will continue to:

- Demand the UK Government reinstate a standalone Department for International Development (DfID), with an aid budget of at least 0.7% of gross national income.
- Demand urgent safe, legal routes to claim asylum in the UK.
- Support a global climate change fund to help ensure that low-income countries can mitigate the impact of climate change and support international calls for compensation.
- Support UN efforts to introduce a binding international treaty on business and human rights, making companies legally accountable for failing to prevent human rights abuses or environmental damage in their operations and supply chains.
- Create much higher scrutiny and restrictions on UK arms exports, ending exports to countries that engage in aggression against others and repression domestically.
- Support the financing and delivery of the United Nations’ 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the commitment made by all UN member states to ‘leave no one behind’ by 2030.
- Increasingly focus on human security as defined by the United Nations Development Programme.
- Support an end to all aid spending on fossil fuel production overseas, redirecting it towards international climate aid.
- Ensure any trade deals are consistent with tackling climate justice.
- Support the rights of small-scale farmers in the Global South to gain access to land, seed and finance, and uphold indigenous peoples’ right to land.

Countries in the Global South faced with geographical exposure, heightened levels of poverty, political instability, and exploitation of their natural resources are the most at risk and least responsible for the climate emergency. The UK’s global responsibility is compounded by ongoing funding of overseas fossil fuel projects and its history of exploitation through imperialism.

As a result of climate change, experts estimate that there could be anywhere between 25 million and 1 billion people forced to leave their homes by 2050.6

The UK immigration system is broken, cruel, and cynical. The Government’s new Immigration Act 2020 strengthens the hostile environment, letting racism feed off the myths and prejudices around “low-skilled” and “illegal” immigration.

The UK must lead the way in supporting countries already suffering loss and damage. This justice requires international agreement, accountable implementation, and compensation.

---