THE GREEN CHALLENGES TO COME

Sadiq Khan
My Vision for a Greener London

Chi Onwurah MP
Growing a sustainable future

Jacinda Ardern
New Zealand’s Climate Opportunity
Welcome to our 2017 Autumn Edition

ANDREW PAKES & ADAM DYSTER

What a difference a few months can make. Little did any of us expect that within days of the last edition landing on people's doorsteps, we'd be gearing up to fight a snap general election.

Whilst the final result may not have been the one we were fighting for - and the UK will have to continue to endure Theresa May's premiership, now propped up by the DUP - it was fantastic to see so many of Labour’s environmental champions elected and re-elected to Parliament.

Particular congratulations go to Exec Members Alan Whitehead MP & Daniel Zeichner MP, who were re-elected with huge increases in their, and to new and returning SERA Members Alex Sobel MP, Luke Pollard MP, Anneliese Dodds MP and David Drew MP. Alex has written for us about his experience as a new MP and how he plans to use his position to champion climate action.

With a hung Parliament, it’s clear that the political environment has shifted, with huge opportunities for Labour to shape legislation and the political agenda for the better. This edition of New Ground looks at some of the biggest green challenges, Labour authorities across the country are showing how to lead with ambition, as Sadiq Khan shows with his piece on his green vision for the capital.

It's clear that, as we enter the new Parliamentary session proper, we are at a crucial moment for the environment - but as the strength of these articles show - Labour is ready for the challenge.

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SERA NEWS

ANDY BURNHAM MANIFESTO & GREEN SUMMIT

As part of Andy Burnham’s ‘Our Manifesto’ process, SERA held a public event in Manchester which brought together environmental organisations from across Greater Manchester to discuss the city-region’s green economy, as well as key challenges such as air quality and sustainable housing.

The event fed into a number of Andy’s manifesto pledges, including support for tree-planting and greater ambition on climate change.

Following Andy Burnham’s election, SERA are delighted to be working on the Mayor's Green Summit,

A BREATH OF FRESH AIR – CAMPAIGN WIN

New Ground is published by SERA, Labour's environment campaign www.sera.org.uk
Email: enquiries@sera.org.uk
If you would like to contribute to future editions or join our mailing list, please contact Adam Dyster, National Organiser at adam.dyster@sera.org.uk

SERA’s clean air campaign, launched last year, called on Labour to back a new national Clean Air Act. We therefore welcomed Sue Hayman MP’s announcement in May that Labour would include this pledge in its 2017 manifesto, promising action within 30 days of entering government.

We’ve also continued working with Labour authorities on their local efforts to tackle air pollution, and are looking forward to continuing this conversation with our clean air conference event ‘Labour Leading the Way on Air Quality’. See back page for details.

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SERA - Campaigning for environmental change & social justice
SERA Campaigning for environmental change & social justice

FEATURE

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plans for the next few months and beyond!

aGm in november, we've got some exciting
don't stop there. From new campaigns to our
up (see the back page for listings)  but our plans
We've got a busy conference programme lined
whA t's NExt?

SERA pARliAmENt ARy RECEptiON &
election 2017

GND GREEN

SERA NEWS

SERA PARLIAMENTARY RECEPTION &
RELAUNCHING THE SERA PARLIAMENTARY NETWORK

The SERA Parliamentary Network was relaunched in July, with a reception jointly hosted with Shadow DEFRA and BEIS teams. With speeches from Sue Hayman MP, Alan Whitehead MP and the group’s new convener Alex Sobel MP, it was great to see so many Labour MPs and Peers passionate about driving an ambitious green agenda. Thanks to Liam Byrne MP for his help hosting this event.

The SERA Parliamentary Network will work with Labour members to help share research, develop policy ideas and coordinate campaigns on environment, energy and transport related issues in Westminster.

We’re looking forward to working with all Labour MPs and Peers to push for environmental and social justice at every opportunity!

WHAT’S NEXT?

We’ve got a busy conference programme lined up (see the back page for listings) but our plans don’t stop there. From new campaigns to our AGM in November, we’ve got some exciting plans for the next few months and beyond!

For updates on all of our work, make sure to follow us on Twitter (@SERAUK) and Facebook (/SERAUK) as well as signing up to our email newsletter at sera.org.uk/join

SERA was heavily involved in Labour’s election manifesto process, calling for environmental justice to be at the heart of the party’s offer.

We provided briefings for the Shadow Cabinet teams, asked our members to take part in public consultations, took part in Socialist Societies meetings and submitted our own manifesto to the NPF, of which our Co-Chair Melanie Smallman is a member.

It was great therefore to see SERA’s recommendations, from action on energy efficiency to supporting the UK’s green economy, front and centre in the final manifesto. SERA has long campaigned for Labour to show real leadership on the environment - this manifesto took that spirit to heart.

As well as policy development, SERA ran several campaigning events, including canvassing in Cambridge for Daniel Zeichner and running a phonebank for Alan Whitehead. We also produced an environmental briefing, which we distributed to all Parliamentary candidates.

Today around 55 per cent of the world’s population live in cities and that number is only set to grow in the years ahead. That means if we’re going to make strides in tackling the big environmental challenges of our time, major cities like London have a crucial role to play.

From introducing low-emission vehicles to installing sustainable infrastructure and making public transport greener, big cities are already taking the lead and harnessing the latest technological solutions to protect our environment.

In an age when national governments are refusing to meet the challenge and the US has announced its withdrawal from the Paris Climate Agreement, this action is vital not just for the future survival of the planet but for our health and wellbeing today.

Since being elected Mayor, one of my top priorities has been bringing forward a range of bold measures to combat climate change and address the scourge of air pollution.

London is the greatest city in the world, but I want to see it become one of the greenest, and for us to regain our past global reputation for being at the forefront of environmental action. As part of this, I recently published my draft environmental strategy – setting out the steps I intend to take to achieve this ambition.

London’s environment and the quality of our air has undoubtedly come a long way since our city was blighted by the Great Stink of the Victorian era or the 1952 Great Smog. Innovations in urban design and the introduction of tough EU regulations have helped to drastically reduce industrial pollution and have made our city a cleaner, greener, more pleasant place to live.

But while recent decades have seen significant improvements, today London is still confronted by a host of environmental challenges that are as severe and pressing as these previous crises.

The current poor state of London’s air is nothing short of a public health emergency. More than 9,000 people lose their lives prematurely every year as a direct result of air pollution – and it is having a particularly negative impact on children, stunting lung growth for life.

Research also shows that some of the worst pollution hotspots are around schools and that London’s most deprived communities are among the hardest hit – meaning poverty and pollution are combining to limit the life chances of countless young Londoners.

In the 21st century – in a city like London – this situation is unacceptable. When people’s health is at stake, we can’t shy away from doing the right thing. As Mayor, I feel I have a duty – a moral responsibility – to act.

So from 2017, we are planning a new levy on the oldest and most polluting vehicles entering central London. We are also proposing a new and expanded Ultra Low Emission Zone to tackle air pollution.

We are investing record sums in public transport and green infrastructure,
by making walking and cycling easier for Londoners, and by phasing out dirty diesel buses - replacing them with brand new lower and zero emission models. I’ve also been vocal in calling for the Government to ensure no weakening of our environmental regulations post-Brexit.

We are committed to boosting London’s green economy and working with local boroughs, London’s businesses, NGOs and community organisations, as well as anyone else who is serious about preserving our natural inheritance, protecting our green spaces and cutting harmful emissions. I am determined to lead by example. And so we are embedding the truth is we all have a shared interest and a role to play in cleaning up our air and meeting our aspiration of turning London into a zero-carbon city by 2050. In the 1950s, great politicians and Londoners implemented bold proposals to save lives and to bring an end to the great smogs. Now it’s our turn to act.

Not only do we owe it to today’s Londoners to create a clean healthy environment, where the air is safe to breathe for all and where everyone can fulfil their potential, but we owe it to the next generation too. This is a battle we can - and must - win.

To have your say on Sadiq’s plans, search “London Environment Strategy”

I like to say that I entered politics in 2010 for exactly the same reason I became an engineer decades earlier – to make the world work, better, for everyone. It’s certainly true that the world isn’t working right now – because of the huge levels of inequality – but also because we’re destroying it, through pollution and climate change.

For me being Labour is fundamentally tied up with being ‘green’ – we need a world that works for everyone, not just for those with the money to move to higher ground.

I am therefore proudly ‘Green Labour’ and a supporter of SERA. As part of this I recognise many shared values and objectives with the Green Party, from fighting austerity to preventing climate change. Labour’s record on environmental sustainability is a strong one: from 1997 to 2010, CO2 emissions fell year-on-year, accompanied by strong economic growth up until the onset of the 2007 global financial crisis.

But what distinguishes us from the Green Party is their belief that economic growth and environmental sustainability cannot go hand in hand, that sustainability means abandoning the quest for greater economic prosperity and achieving a ‘steady-state’ of zero growth.

In engineering, steady-state means ‘no change’, and in economics it’s largely the same. I don’t believe steady-state economics is the right way forward for our country – or even a way ‘forward’ at all. But to understand why, we have to start with the science.

The Second Law of Thermodynamics

Physics has always been the science which economics aspired to. And in 1971, the economist Nicholas Georgescu-Roegen – who wanted to be a physicist – drew a connection between physical laws and economic activity. He wrote a book called ‘The Entropy Law and the Economic Process’.

Since then, many green or ecological economists have taken his lead in applying thermodynamic principles to economics. This has been particularly influential in the field of sustainability and is one of the driving ideas behind zero-growth approaches to economics.

The argument goes that if the Second Law of Thermodynamics tells us that energy will become less and less available over time – and is therefore a finite resource – then there is a hard limit to the growth potential of any economy. There is a problem with this analogy, however. Entropy measures the dispersal or disorder of energy in a closed or isolated system. The Earth is not a closed system: it is an open system in a universe which is both infinite and expanding – that in itself is enough to blow most minds. The Earth receives enough energy from the sun every hour to power the planet for a year.

So the question is not ‘how can we use less energy’ in absolute terms. It is ‘how can we effectively transform that energy into wellbeing?’

Technological innovation

The best way of using energy more efficiently is through technological innovation. For example, the economist Carlota Perez has argued that the development and adoption of ICT technologies changes the rules of the economy. They make a ‘global green positive-sum game’ possible, allowing us to evolve towards a more sustainable future.

But it is competition for economic growth that drives innovation. Without some competition we will not have innovation. Steady state economics rejects the potential of innovation. The concept of steady state disavows the notion of evolution and in doing so makes us all poorer.

Beyond the economic imperative for innovation there is also a fundamental psychological need for change. Humans everywhere desire self-actualisation. This drives so much of our lives, from career choices to directing holiday hobbies. It may be the top of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs – prioritised after everything else – but it is still fundamental. And it is completely contrary to the idea of steady state.
SERA  Campaigning for environmental change & social justice

Implementing steady - state economics

Just look at the people all over the world yearning for change, for political revolution, for sustainable economic growth. If there was a mass movement for a steady state economy, what would it be like? "What do we want? No change! When do we want it? Yesterday!"

The current system is a mixed capitalist system, whether we like it or not – and I certainly know many people who don’t like it. The production of the goods that we need to survive and thrive is motivated by the drive for profit or growth. Introducing a steady state economy would risk the total collapse of the chains of production that our society depends on.

There is also the small question of the rest of the world. Many countries – and many parts of Britain – have not experienced the fruits of growth as fully as they should have. I am deeply experienced the fruits of growth as an industrialising west country with a growing population – we have benefitted so much from it. I believe people across the world – whether in Newcastle England or Newcastle South Africa – should have the right to make a living, to thrive, and to improve their lives and their communities. And it is also through trade and exchange that we can better

Labour’s industrial strategy

The next Labour Government will go further than the last in putting sustainability at the heart of its industrial strategy. The Labour-run City Council quickly adopted a Clean Air Strategy that identifies the key ways in which we will make improvements and get back within legal limits across the city.

Southampton is one of the five areas in England identified as having an air pollution problem that exceeds EU air quality limits. The Labour-run City Council quickly adopted a Clean Air Strategy that identifies the key ways in which we will make improvements and get back within legal limits across the city.

One of our key measures is to encourage the take-up of Electric Cars (EVs) both for private and commercial use. This was an aspiration to which we were committed despite the challenges of starting in a blank page. In Southampton, we had no electric charging points, one EV van which wasn’t widely used and there were no incentives for private motorists. If an EV revolution was coming, it didn’t appear to come from the Council!

When I was elected in 2013 and started to challenge this fact, a senior officer kindly informed me that he felt that the Council did not have the resources to chase ‘Cinderella’ projects such as this.

CHI ONWURAH MP is Shadow Minister for Industrial Strategy, Science & Innovation and Labour MP for Newcastle upon Tyne Central. She tweets at @ChiOnwurah.

• Announced that 20% of our 400-strong fleet will be EVs by 2020
• Changed procurement rules so that all new vehicles are EV by default.
• Planned to start installing 50 public Charge Points across the city
• Replaced three of our diesel road sweepers with electric models.
• Introduced a taxi scrappage scheme to get the more polluting vehicles off the road and replaced with EVs or hybrids.

If we demonstrate political leadership at the local government level, we can help unlock the EV revolution. Government needs to provide the national leadership, or at the very least, not hamper those who are at the forefront of leading change.
THE NEXT TWO YEARS COULD BE THE MOST CRUCIAL FOR THE ENVIRONMENT FOR A LONG TIME.

The referendum might have shown very mixed feelings about the UK’s membership of the EU, but there is little doubt that on the environmental front the EU has played a hugely positive role, both raising environmental standards and, crucially, monitoring and enforcing them.

The proof of the pudding is for all to see and experience: cleaner beaches, cleaner and healthier seas, higher standards of water protection, cleaner air (although urban air pollution caused by transport emissions still remains to be tackled effectively), and improved protection for special wildlife areas (although we continue to see species decline that depend on the farmed countryside). We are no longer the ‘dirty man of Europe’ and that has been of huge benefit to people and communities across the UK. We don’t want to go back there.

The government had committed to leaving the environment in a better state than it inherited it. The time has come to test that commitment.

Much will depend on the post-Brexit environmental legal settlement. Labour must play a key role if the big progress in environmental standards, which we helped shape in the EU, is not to be diluted. The public didn’t vote for the referendum for poorer environmental quality. The sheer volume of issues which need to be dealt with before we can leave the EU could however risk the environment being side-lined as less important than trade or the rights of EU and UK nationals, or the border in Ireland or freedom of movement or research collaboration. I could go on. The point I make, without the focus and energy needed, our environment settlement could suffer, either by accident or design.

One thing is sure – there has to be a replacement for the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) by the time we leave the EU. Not many people will shed a tear for CAP and the damage it has done to our wider countryside. We now have a once-in-several-lifetimes opportunity to create a new agricultural and land use policy which will move from landowners three billion pounds of taxpayers’ money primarily according to the size of their landholding, and instead use that funding to support them to deliver a range of public benefits – including climate change mitigation, biodiversity improvement, water quality, soil protection, healthy affordable food and sustainable rural communities.

Greener UK is a coalition of the UK’s major environmental NGOs, including the Woodland Trust, which I chair, with a combined membership of 7.9 million people. It was formed in 2016 with the understanding that Brexit represents such a pivotal moment for the UK environment. The coalition sees how vital it is for good-thinking people across the political parties to come together to safeguard and improve the environment at this time of big opportunity and big threat.

So what is the political task? The Repeal Bill (no longer Great!) is aimed at bringing EU environmental and other legislation across from EU to UK law. We know already that this can’t be a perfect drag and drop exercise as some legislation will need minor tweaking to be “operable” and some, like agriculture policy, will need a completely new piece of primary legislation. So far, my string of parliamentary questions on which legislation falls into which category have yielded little clarification.

Additionally, some key overarching principles which have informed EU law apparently won’t come across unscathed to the current proposals. These vital principles, such as ‘polluter pays’ and the ‘precautionary principle’, must be incorporated into UK law through amendments to the Repeal Bill.

We also run the risk of losing aspects of EU legislation that have helped drive environmental improvement when the government has been dragging its feet. The European Commission and the Court of Justice of the European Union have powers which mean that citizens have access to environmental justice and the EU has teeth in making member states up their game if they lagged in implementation.

One simple example – the UK had dragged its feet for years on cleanup of the Thames, which meant that it reached the status of the dirtiest river to run through an EU capital city, with neat sewerage discharged into it on a regular basis. Only infractions proceedings by the EU Commission and the threat of eye-watering fines moved the government to long overdue investment in the Thames Tideway, London’s super-sewer.

Without EU enforcement, domestic measures will need to be included in the UK legislation to ensure that monitoring, reporting and enforcement measures are as effective as those wielded by the EU. The recent government proposals on cross-border judicial co-operation in criminal matters are no clearer, but the UK will need serious scrutiny of its new landscape through this process. EU and UK nationals, or the border in Ireland or freedom of movement or research collaboration. I could go on. The point I make, without the focus and energy needed, our environment settlement could suffer, either by accident or design.

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The political dynamic will be very different, with bold political acts at home and renewed co-operation with our European colleagues. We are after all leaving the EU but not leaving the European biosphere! The single market is a clear example of the importance of continued collaboration on energy and climate change with the EU. Innovative new domestic laws on world-leading sustainable fisheries management are also needed, with fishing levels that allow fish stocks to recover and the documentation of all fish caught.

I wake up every morning contemplating the next two years with an equally mixed frisson of fear and exhilaration. The people of the UK deserve clean air, clean water, a stable climate, healthy seas, beautiful landscapes and thriving wildlife in places they love. Party arithmetic means that Labour has an opportunity to really take a leadership role to land the new settlement for the environment for the people of the UK.
The Fisheries Bill: Taking Back Control of Our Waters

MELANIE ONN MP

The fishing industry, most prominently from the Shetland Fishermen’s Association, Simon Collins said the Fisheries Bill, despite not yet being published, “has huge ramifications and could hardly have been improved on from the industry’s point of view.”

He is not alone. There have been similar comments from the National Federation of Fishermen’s Organisations and the Shetland Fishermen’s Association, Simon Collins said the Fisheries Bill, despite not yet being published, “has huge ramifications and could hardly have been improved on from the industry’s point of view.”

While a strong lobby for the industry is welcome, there are a number of things that are concerning about this rush of enthusiasm for a Bill that is yet to be drafted. The fishing industry, most prominently from the catching sector’s perspective, has high expectations from the Brexit negotiations. It is no surprise they were promised a great deal. There is an abullence about the possibilities that await them. This exuberance comes not only from the fishermen but many of the communities they operate from, or used to operate from.

The fishing industry, most prominently from the catching sector’s perspective, has high expectations from the Brexit negotiations. It is no surprise they were promised a great deal. There is an abullence about the possibilities that await them. This exuberance comes not only from the fishermen but many of the communities they operate from, or used to operate from.

The majority of fish traded through auction at the market comes from Iceland or Norway. It comes from deep sea trawlers catching ‘demersal’ species, the UK’s preferred fish such as cod, haddock and plaice, which live much closer to the sea bed. This is in contrast to the ‘pelagic’ variety that (usually) insore fishermen catch: herrings, sardines etc. Grimsby’s days of having hundreds of trawlers in its ports are long gone and the space for landings is now limited. On my last visit to the Port of Grimsby East (where the Fish Market is situated) three scallop trawlers were landing which meant another two vessels had to wait until they’d finished before they could take their turn. The old pontoon is now moorings for personal yachts and dhinghies with the area showing its age and falling into disrepair.

Despite funding from the European Maritime and Fisheries Fund, there has been little to arrest the decline of many of these port towns with the effect of investment not always seen or felt by the wider public.

Take Great Grimsby’s Fish Market. This is a market that sees hundreds of thousands of pounds of traded fish per year pass through its halls. From the trawlers operating for commercial buyers, to the staff who run the market and those selling direct around the country from their fish vans, it is an essential hub that maintains a presence of active fishing in the town. Without this market, the many processing firms – Flatfish, SeaChill, Youngs etc – would have less reason to remain in the town.

There are approximately 5000 jobs in Grimsby linked to the fishing industry. As it stands, there is a fisheries hub, whether it’s landing it, selling it, smoking it or turning it into fishcakes, it all happens within a two mile radius of the market.

I suspect few people in the town, if asked, would recognise the importance of retaining the market to maintaining a seafood presence at all.

Within the fishing fraternity the optimism for Brexit remains high. The promises of ‘taking back control’, in particular, taking back control of our waters, are an enticing proposition for many who have struggled with the EU’s slow turning wheels and sense that other member states were not always playing by the same rules.

This declaration would include exclusivity of the 12 mile limit or, more ambitiously, the 200 mile limit. For fishermen who are trying to turn a profit, whose principal interests are fuel costs, labour costs, and price per kilo of the fish they’re landing, ‘control of our waters’ means:

- UK registered inshore vessels fishing for pelagic species having exclusive access to the waters within the 12 mile limit (or 200 mile)
- Opportunity for increasing quota
- Moving from quota to a ‘days at sea’ model
- Opportunity for increasing the total allocable catch

Increasing yield, depending on availability, should of course result in greater profits, thereby making the sustainability of employment greater and outgrowing much less of a pressure point. However, these freedoms in the water don’t guarantee a larger catch, especially given that fish tend not to be constrained by our imposed borders. They do not protect against an increase in UK registered vessels, which could crowd the UK sector, nor do they prevent overfishing. They don’t provide additional investment in patrol vessels or staff and they don’t ensure any support for the building of new trawlers, which can cost in excess of one million pounds before the issue of quota is even considered.

There will still need to be management and control of vessels and catch and discussions with our nearest neighbours about possible reciprocal relationships to prevent overfishing. These are all questions that must be answered in the Fisheries Bill.

There must be consideration of the negotiations with other nations about quota and how any new system would work alongside the EU’s quota system. There must be mention of the impact on the quota rental system, which has now become well-established, and the fact that quota is now a bankable asset.

For those wanting the 200 mile limit, they will see one of the ‘Grimby’s Wars’ to the back of their minds. Given that one of our most reliable sources of imported fish comes from Iceland, it would be dangerous to over-speculate that current arrangements are disturbed as it would have a direct impact on high-quality Grimsby’s fishing market and the availability of the nation’s preferred white fish.

The Bill must consider the industry as a whole – that means everything from the environment to catching, landing at ports, auction, retail, right through to what ends up on the consumer’s plate (or wrapped in yesterday’s newspaper).

Once the arguments with the EU are no longer a factor, it is unlikely to be smooth sailing. Grips within the industry will possibly turn to international, with English ports and vessels complaining about Scottish ports and vessels who in turn complain about Northern Irish or Welsh ports and vessels. It is a competitive industry and it is that competitiveness that has led to so many placing so much hope in leaving the EU.

It would be seen as a great betrayal if the promises made by so many in the Leave campaign - that access to water, quotas, landing obligations, provision, sustainability, environment, safety, price and availability would all be negotiated in the UK’s favour – do not come to fruition and an industry that is worth a relatively small percentage of the country’s GDP, is, again, used as a bargaining chip in the negotiations.

An even greater betrayal would be if the government failed to protect the industry as it currently stands and traditional port towns, like Great Grimsby, are unable to operate as they currently do, let alone expand into a port of a hundred trawlers.

MELANIE ONN MP is the Labour MP for Great Grimsby and Shadow Housing Minister. She tweets at @OnnMel.

12. SERA Campaigning for environmental change & social justice 13. SERA Campaigning for environmental change & social justice
Suddenly everyone in the media is an expert on chlorine-washed chicken and how big landowners will hoard huge amounts of land, a lack of financial and other support for new farmers and the risks of new deals without the detail of a whole new farm support scheme. The Government has promised to keep the current system (c. £3.3bn) until 2022 but the industry might set a transition period after leaving the EU to establish a new farm policy after 2022. If the plan is to change the new policy and subsidy regime in the Bill, then consultation will need to be completed at a breakneck pace.

Given that the devolved administrations have made it clear they want all this to be devolved responsibility – which makes sense as they know better than Westminster what they need their farm system to look like – there is a huge, complicated process ahead.

Sustain proposes a new Land Management Scheme of payments based on farmers delivering public goods such as protecting nature, preventing flooding, and promoting organic, agroforestry and pasture-based systems. Additional capital grants, finance advice and wider policy measures should ensure farmers can thrive. Backing new enterprise will be key, including entrants into small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), organic, agroforestry and struggling sectors like fruit and vegetables, whilst overhauling farmer training.

What ‘public goods’ would Labour prioritise in such a scheme? And what safeguards will Labour support to avoid major farm amalgamations? Entering new entrants into farming encounter overpriced land, lack of financial and other support, and an inadequately regulated food supply chain. Will Labour improve their chances?

It is clear that the economics of farming must shift. The market will matter more than ever and value in the food system goes where it is needed. Equally, we must resist utterly any deals that flood us with cheap, unethically produced food from across the globe.

Many ideas and proposals are appearing, suggesting new farm policy for the future. Labour must assess these and listen to farmers and the public – both rural and urban – on what they think is important. Polling suggests that the electorate do still believe farmers should be publicly supported. And we should ignore those who say consumers just buy on price – it’s far, far more complicated than that.

Food and farming is rarely an election issue unless a crisis or food scare looms. But we all have to eat and we all need our countryside, water, soil and wildlife to be well looked after. Labour must prioritise this in the weeks and months ahead, and will have many allies in doing so.
A TOXIC BREXIT?
THE GOVERNMENT MUST PROVIDE CLARITY ON THE FUTURE OF CHEMICALS REGULATION

MARY CREAGH MP

Whatever the outcome of the Brexit negotiations, people deserve to be able to enjoy our treasured natural spaces, and iconic British species, and to know that these are protected in trust for future generations. Yet David Davis’ ‘constructive ambiguity’ at the negotiating table and the Repeal Bill’s failure to tackle the legal nightmare of untangling 40 years’ of European law from UK law is creating a toxic uncertainty over the future of the UK’s environment and key industries.

The lack of clarity about what Brexit means is already harming key UK industries, and the Chancellor has warned Theresa May that unless there is more progress in the negotiations then key businesses will start moving out of the UK to ensure business continuity after the UK leaves the EU.

The chemicals industry is one of the key sectors affected by Brexit. It is the UK’s second largest export to the EU after cars, selling almost £15bn of goods into the European single market every year.

For the past 10 years, UK businesses and the Government have been working with partners and allies in Europe under the ‘REACH’ chemicals regulation. REACH registers, evaluates and assesses 30,000 substances from paints and pesticides to the non-stick coating on a frying pan. It aims to ensure that people and the environment across Europe are protected from hazardous substances, and that chemicals businesses are able to trade with each other on a level playing field.

REACH was adopted by the EU in 2007 and covers the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation & restriction of Chemicals.

The Government’s Repeal Bill aims to cut and paste EU law into UK law, but it is entirely inadequate in dealing with the problems Brexit has created for the chemicals industry. A key part of the REACH system involves data-sharing with the European Chemicals Agency, a feature which cannot be replicated by having our own agency and our own regime.

The uncertainty over the future of this regime is harming businesses now. TechUK, the industry body representing many high-tech firms, which use chemicals regulated by REACH, told my Committee in Parliament that the uncertainty created by Brexit is ‘causing waves’ in the industry, and warned of the risks of ‘market freeze’ and ‘supply chain disruption’. The Chemical Business Association said that one in five of their members are investigating moves out of the UK to ensure business continuity after the UK leaves the EU.

The Tories have no answers over the future of chemicals regulation. When I asked DEFRA Minister Thérèse Coffey MP in Parliament whether the UK would continue to participate in REACH after Brexit, she simply repeated the mantra about leaving the single market and ending ECJ jurisdiction. The Government’s position papers published over the summer have done nothing to deal with the uncertainty in the industry, because the Prime Minister is prioritising her own job instead of the jobs of those who work in the chemicals industry. Her main priority is surviving her party conference with her Cabinet and backbenchers in open warfare over the EU.

The clock is ticking, and businesses fear an approaching cliff edge. Brexit puts a whole swathe of UK environmental protections at risk.

A transitional deal that ensures the UK continues to participate in REACH is vital to the economy, and to ensuring that public health and the environment is protected from hazardous substances. Industry needs time to adapt to the changes brought by Brexit. But the clock is ticking, and businesses fear an approaching cliff edge.

Brexit puts a whole swathe of UK environmental protections at risk.

It is estimated that 80% of UK environmental regulations are shaped by Brussels, and a quarter of all the law that the Repeal Bill aims to cut and paste is DEFRA-related.

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There’s also the question of enforcement and monitoring, EU air pollution standards are for example already transposed into UK law, but the European Commission has a role in monitoring compliance, and verdicts from the European Court of Justice have been key to ClientEarth’s successful legal cases against the Government’s lacklustre air pollution plans. This way of holding the Government to account cannot be replicated by the Repeal Bill.

The Bill would also leave environmental protections vulnerable to being quietly dropped at the stroke of a Minister’s pen, with no prior consultation and without full Parliamentary scrutiny. Key protections for our wildlife risk becoming ‘zombie legislation’, no longer updated or enforced. I have been calling on the Government to pass a new Environmental Protection Act in order to guarantee that our world-class environmental protections are not watered down after the UK leaves the EU.

Brexit is the biggest administrative and constitutional task since World War Two. ‘Constructive ambiguity’ is of no help to anyone trying to run a business and plan for Brexit, and offers no reassurance that environmental protections will not be watered down after we leave. The Government must continue our membership of the Single Market after we leave the European Union and pass a new Environmental Protection Act. The Prime Minister needs to start doing the best thing for Britain, rather than the best thing for her party.

Mary Creagh MP is Chair of the Environmental Audit Committee and Labour MP for Wakefield. She tweets at @MaryCreaghMP
With the Government pursuing an ill-advised and short-sighted attack on renewables, the United Kingdom is set to miss its target of producing 15% of its energy needs from renewable sources by 2020. To put this into context, the European Union is set to meet its target of producing 20% of its energy needs in the same period. The UK is missing its own unambitious targets.

This hasn’t happened in a policy vacuum. It’s a direct result of the Conservatives scrapping subsidies for onshore wind farms, solar energy, biomass fuel conversion, killing the flagship green homes scheme, selling off the Green Investment Bank, scrapping the green tax target, and many more decisions taken as part of their sustained attack on renewable energy.

The Gower Regeneration project, a community-owned solar farm, has been supported by the Welsh Government. It is not something that would have been supported by the Conservatives. This serves as a telling case study into the contrast between a Labour Government’s support for new, renewable forms of energy and the Conservative’s slashing of support for them. The Welsh Government is completely committed to renewable energy and, despite significant budget cuts passed down from Westminster, has supported projects like the Gower solar farm through its Energy Wales plan. Energy Wales is a framework and delivery plan for how Wales will transition to becoming a low carbon country. Only a few years after its inception, solar farms such as the one in my constituency are springing up as a result of the Welsh Government’s foresight on this issue.

In this harsh climate for renewables, new solutions and radical ideas are needed. As we scale back on the use of fossil fuels, the UK Government seems to think we can solely rely on fracking to meet our energy needs. They have already approved fracking under my constituency of Gower, the first Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the United Kingdom. If we follow the path we are currently on, coal and oil will be replaced by tearing up huge parts of our national parks. Basing our energy policy on fracking is also a risk – research has recently uncovered that fracking produces much less fuel and profits than originally anticipated. We need a different way forward.

You have probably heard of the Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon. The conditions around Swansea Bay make it perfect for a project of this nature. Both the River Tawe and River Neath enter the sea here. The proposal would build 16 hydro turbines and a six-mile breakwater wall around this area. Within just three hours of the turbine gates being shut, there would be a 14ft difference in water level inside the lagoon, with electricity being generated by incoming and outgoing water, four times a day, every day. It would generate enough energy to power 155,000 homes for the next 120 years. Where the Government’s short-sightedness has created a huge hole in our capacity to power our country in future years, the Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon offers a way forward.

The benefits aren’t just environmental. West Wales was found by the Inequality Briefing to be the poorest region in Northern Europe. Large infrastructure projects are few and far between. The Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon offers a rare glimpse of UK Government-provided hope in an area that is too often forgotten about by those who currently run Westminster. The project has a projected £1.3bn capital spend, the majority of which will be spent in Wales and across the UK. The construction period is expected to contribute £316 million in Gross Value Added to the Welsh economy, and £76 million a year thereafter. In an area still struggling to recover from the loss of mining and manufacturing industries, the Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon offers yet another solution.

But despite £35m already having been invested, despite the Government-commissioned Hendry Report calling for it to be signed off on ‘as soon as possible’, despite the 2015 Conservative manifesto promising the Lagoon, the Government still hasn’t signed the project off. The proposal – which could offer so much for West Wales, is effectively sat on Theresa May’s desk gathering dust, waiting for sign-off.

Investors’ money won’t last forever. David Stevens, the founder of Admiral Insurance recently said that, “if there’s no evidence that the Government is committed then at some point the patience of investors will be exhausted”. He’s been proven right. Swansea Tidal Lagoon investors have now reportedly decided to delay further investments in the proposed £1.3 billion project, fearing it could be further stalled due to the Government’s indecisiveness to give it a final go-ahead. With money running out, it is reported that staff have been asked to cut back to four day working weeks. Unless the Government acts, in the words of Stevens, “an opportunity will have been lost and it will be very hard to piece together again in future”.

Labour’s Welsh Government and First Minister Carwyn Jones are delivering through the Energy Wales programme. Labour’s Swansea Campaign leader Rob Stewart and the Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon offers delivering through the City Deal they have won for Swansea. But when the Conservatives in Westminster have a chance to deliver – for renewable energy, for investment, and for my constituency of Gower – they dither and delay.

Ultimately, it’s not just my constituency that would feel the benefits of this project. Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon is a pathfinder project. It offers a completely scalable blueprint for the whole programme, opening the opportunity for a fleet of tidal lagoons across the country of varying sizes. Economies of scale apply, so the proposed follow-up larger lagoons could provide an even cheaper energy price. The Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon is therefore the litmus test for a renewable energy revolution across the UK.

The Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon is therefore the litmus test for a renewable energy revolution across the UK. It may come down to a choice between gambling on an inefficient method and risking our country’s natural heritage with fracking, or signing off on the Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon. The Government will have to choose the path forward in the coming months.

To sign Tonia’s petition calling on the Government to sign off the Swansea Bay Tidal Lagoon, visit toniaantoniazzi.co.uk/tidallagoon

TONIA ANTONIAZZI MP is the Labour MP for Gower. She tweets at @ToniaAntoniazzi

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TONIA ANTONIAZZI MP
While July marks the start of summer holidays for many people, on the frontline of fracking it marked anything but. In Lancashire, where local residents have stopped any fracking taking place for six years, a month of “Rolling Resistance” brought together people from across the country and beyond to oppose fracking in the UK.

Grassroots groups and individuals working together managed to stage a stunt or action every working day of the month to prevent or delay planned operations by fracking company Cuadrilla. There were joyful carnival-esque mass demonstrations, powerful processions from the anti-fracking ‘Nanas’ (local grandmothers opposing fracking for the harm it will inflict on their families) and physical blockades of the site on Preston New Road, come rain or shine.

Pulling off an entire month of heightened opposition shows the strength and diversity of this movement of people opposing fracking. Many people taking direct action throughout July were the first to admit that they would never let alone “environmentalists”.

Yet these councillors, grandparents, former civil servants, farmers and many more have all organised demonstrations, rallied friends and families, and even put their own bodies in the way of the fracking industry drilling in their neighbourhood. This takes serious bravery and commitment. Yet many of those I spoke with have the same fierce determination and conviction that fracking in Lancashire is wrong. They are deeply concerned by the risks to their local air quality, to their beautiful fields, to their water supply. They are appalled at the idea of opening up a new fossil fuel industry when the world is also experiencing dangerous climate change. They scoff at the fracking industry’s empty promises for local people. Because they have seen companies like Cuadrilla collaborate with government to stamp on local democracy.

For fracking is also a story of a Conservative Government running roughshod over local opposition. Lancashire County Council rejected Cuadrilla’s bid to frack at Preston New Road - and yet Tory minister Sajid Javid decided to overrule this decision in October 2016 and give fracking the green light. So much for localism (again). Social media’s rallying cry for July’s Rolling Resistance therefore echoed the Lancashire residents choice: #WeSaidNo.

I’m proud that last year Labour took the brave decision to say: enough. The next Labour government will be the first to oppose fracking in the UK. Thanks to the sustained protests and opposition so far, Cuadrilla are losing investor confidence, and several businesses in their supply chain have pulled out of working with fracking companies. Under serious pressure, Cuadrilla have even resorted to breaching equipment into the Lancashire site outside of permitted hours.

Political support for fracking is becoming a clear dividing line, with the Tories on the wrong side. 30 marginal Labour constituencies (within 5,000 votes either way) contain sites which have been granted fracking licences. A growing number of these licence blocks are set to see planning applications lodged in the coming months. It’s time to step up resistance to this reckless and outdated form of energy production.

As Yasmin Qureshi, MP for Bolton South East and Shadow Justice Minister, who recently visited the Lancs site, has said, “I believe that it’s time that our Labour politicians did more to oppose fracking in Parliament, particularly as it is Labour Party policy. They should show their support for peaceful protests against fracking whenever possible.”

Louisa Casson is an environmental campaigner and is a member of the SERA Executive Committee. She tweets at @LouisaCasson

Photo credit ‘Reclaim the Power’
Climate change is undeniably one of the greatest threats that we face in our world today.

From developing countries in the tropics buckling under the weight of huge storm surges to coastal cities in America where the sea often meets the road, few countries can escape the effects of global warming. The 2015 Paris Accord was a huge accomplishment, with 195 countries signed on and at least 160 having since ratified. Despite a successful agreement, it’s this tiny number that’s used in the calculation of our emissions.

New Zealand is responsible for a small total of emissions on a global scale, with an average of 0.1% of global net greenhouse gas emissions per annum between 1990 and 2011.

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Carbon budgeting is crucial to meeting our targets and Labour has looked to the example of the United Kingdom. We will establish an independent climate commission because we firmly believe that proper carbon budgeting delivers results, something we’ve seen from the UK, where carbon budgeting has seen emissions drop 45 per cent since 2008. It will also allow us to take the planning out of the hands of politicians and remove it from the short-term thinking that accompanies our three-year electoral cycle. An independent climate commission will determine where and how we reduce emissions across our economy and these budgets will be legally binding.

Labour will also address agriculture. Our Emissions Trading Scheme, weakened by the current government, will include all sectors. A science-led discussion must be had about the relative impacts of short-run and long-run gases, and how to account for them. It is not feasible to wait for cows to cease emitting, or to spend billions offshore on credits while emissions rise at home. The sooner we face up to this issue, the more likely it is that we will be able to ease the path for exposed industries, and continue to innovate as we respond to this global challenge.

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The Government that I lead will not settle for a lack of action. The New Zealand Labour Party has a history of putting people first – it strikes to the very core of our values. That means we need to put plans in place to protect our communities and individuals, and to achieve positive outcomes for workforces in changing industries. Climate change will bring with it the most significant economic transformation in modern history. Industries and workforces currently employed in high-emission industries must not be consigned to the scrap heap as we respond to the shocks of unplanned and urgent economic upheaval. Offering the right qualifications and skills in the regions where they’re required is the kind of joined up thinking from a progressive and future-focused government that will ensure that we minimise the shocks and ensure a “just transition” to a low-carbon economy.
The effects of climate change and resource depletion mean that the old, tired way of doing business is an insufficient and inadequate response to the challenges facing today’s advanced economies. Governments and businesses must come together to create new models of inclusive and sustainable growth. This is what is happening in Wales.

In the same way that the availability of natural resources put Wales at the forefront of the first industrial revolution, driving the growth of iron and coal, and then steel and manufacturing, it is our abundant use of those resources.

The Welsh Labour Government is leading the way with a green growth agenda which provides a blueprint for the UK’s decarbonisation pathway through the 2020s and early 2030s. Under current policies the UK is on track to miss its legally binding emission reduction targets for the mid 2020s onwards, prompting warnings that more action is needed. The delay has led to growing frustration amongst business and industry leaders, with calls for it to be published as soon as possible in order to avoid an investment hiatus and spiralling decarbonisation costs.

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In a competitive global marketplace, companies will invest where there are the best conditions to enable long term sustainable growth. The Welsh Government has recognised the critical importance of building the confidence required for long term investment. It has introduced a strong legislative framework that can give certainty beyond electoral cycles. With its Well-Being for Future Generations Act and Environment Act the Welsh Government has set out a legal framework in which far reaching economic, environmental and social policy can be developed.

A commitment to sustainable development has also long been a distinctive feature of Welsh devolution. With a Future Generations Commissioner appointed to ensure this commitment is being delivered, this puts Wales above and beyond many of its counterparts the world over. It is this strong ambition and drive that can help Wales become a world leader in green growth, providing a platform and location where companies who share these values can thrive.

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It is clear that the next 20 years will see a period of massive technology led change and much of the technology required for green growth already exists but needs applying on a large scale. The size of the economic and technological transition required will need a truly innovative approach, with the increasing pace of technological development able to deliver significant change for the next generation.

Young peoples’ voices will be critical to this process as the generation who will be at the heart of driving change over the next 20 years. The challenge now is to drive green growth widely and quickly, as we face the risks and opportunities of the twenty first century.

Successful markets need a strong clear strategic vision and an effective regulatory regime. The UK Tory Government has neither. In Wales our Government has reformed and amalgamated our environmental organisations, leading in April 2013, to the creation of Natural Resources Wales (NRW). NRW’s role is to ensure the sustainable use of Wales’ natural resources as a positive partner in green growth. NRW itself manages or owns 126,000 hectares of woodland estate and 10,000 hectares of other coastal and river based assets and acts as a catalyst for both environmental and economic priorities.

If the UK Government has any sort of real ambition to lead on green growth it must do likewise and put in place long term statutory goals to reflect what we want to see both now and in the future. It must improve the position of business and prioritise investing in high quality and sustainable infrastructure, making the UK a more attractive place to do business. At the moment we have a UK Government that cannot take a decision on the tidal lagoon, U-turns on rail electrification investment and fails to invest in energy efficiency, all of which provides the vital economic and environmental infrastructure needed to boost jobs and growth and support the environment.

The Secretary of State would do well to remember this and take a look over the border to Wales for inspiration.
Since the spring when I highlighted the challenges and opportunities as we move towards sustainable land use in Scotland, much has happened. The Climate Change Plan scrutiny period is almost over. Agriculture remains one of the GHG heaviest emitters and the Plan is not as robust as it should be in relation to land use. The Scottish Government still has time to face the stark truth that while there is good practice, encouragement alone is not enough. The Plan should also relate to the Land Use Strategy, the status of which should be statutory.

The Climate Change Bill is out to consultation now. Our first Climate Change Plan scrutiny was in some European countries. This change in our infrastructure such as range of initiatives – not least real change in our transport system. The Scottish Government to introduce an award for local authorities which I developed. The first winner is Glasgow and there will be an on-road segregated cycle route from the Gorbals to the heart of the city built by summer 2018.

The Climate Change Plan has so far failed to properly address modal shift in its proposals. It is extraordinary that there is so little commitment to active travel while the focus for change rests on the move from fuel to low emission vehicles. While this will be essential, it ignores the congestion and air. There are also significant health risks. New research has also suggested that Scotland’s geology is not suitable for any significant unconventional gas extraction.

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Bus re-regulation is also a fundamental part of this. It is so disappointing that Iain Gray’s Bill ran out of time in the last Scottish Parliament. We are now determined to build on this work for both our rural and urban communities. All these transport commitments will help address air pollution which is an unacceptable health hazard for our communities. Finally, we must never overlook our marine environment. The Marine Act (2010) has set the foundations for robust marine policies, underpinned by the first Climate Change Act. This must be upgraded to include proposals to develop Blue Carbon – the carbon captured by our oceans and marine ecosystems. Scottish Labour is also supportive of a Deposit and Return Scheme which will bring a radical change in our seas – keeping plastic bottles out of our waters and away from sea life. What’s more, by keeping them in the circular economy we will also be bringing more new jobs in remanufacturing.

SCOTTISH CHALLENGES: SHAPING THE CLIMATE CHANGE PLAN

CLAUDIA BEAMISH MSP

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SWEARING IN: LIFE AS A NEW MP

ALEX SOBEL

As a candidate in a marginal seat you don’t really consider the detail of what entering Parliament actually means. Everything is about the campaign, especially when it is as short and unexpected as 2017 was. In 7 busy weeks we registered voters, built our volunteer infrastructure and talked to as many people as possible about the issues that mattered to them. It was a campaign full of energy, with existing members and new volunteers alike coming out in huge numbers, passionate about the topics we talked about, from free education to improving air quality.

It was therefore after an amazing, whirlwind few weeks that I found myself walking into the Palace of Westminster on the 12th June as myself walking into the Palace of Westminster on the 12th June as my first experience! Even if you get to speak there’s uncertainty about how much time you will get, which is something you’ve seen from the outside and might have a general understanding of, but learning how to become involved, instigate and influence is another matter – not to mention some of the odder traditions which can seem incredible on first experience! Even if you get to speak there’s uncertainty about how much time you will get, which sometimes means you have to scratch out whole sections of your speech minutes before delivering it.

How then in this environment can MPs progress issues – especially longer term ones like climate change that the Government would at best like to ignore? There are a number of tools at an MP’s disposal. Select Committees, for example, are particularly powerful tools designed to hold the government to account. As independent parliamentary groups they can scrutinise key topics, grill ministers and witnesses. I have therefore applied to be on the Environmental Audit Committee where I can question departments on how they are meeting their obligations under the Paris Agreement or ask about the effect of Brexit on the environment. Written and oral questions are another key tool, with ministers compelled to answer direct questions. Cross-party alliances are also useful, with climate cutting across party lines, and whilst I haven’t done this yet the importance of the issue means that I am willing to put tribalism aside to make gains. Finally, via both the media and speeches in the chamber, you can speak out and raise the profile of climate issues, challenging deniers and highlighting the need to act.

On the environment I started as I meant to go on, using my maiden speech to highlight the urgent action needed on climate change as well as my commitment to use my position in Parliament to drive progress on the issue:

“In the words of President Obama: “No challenge poses a greater threat to future generations than climate change.”

This Chamber is a stage where the world can hear our voice. It is incumbent on me to find that voice to ensure that while I sit on these Benches, I will speak truth to power and be an advocate for this one issue, which will define and shape our future more than any other.

Action to combat climate change will give us the best possible chance to save this planet, because it is the only home that we have got. If we do not ensure that we take every step towards a carbon-free future, we will be judged as having failed future generations, and I am sure nobody came into this House to be a failure.’

Those words have been twenty years in the making. I was inspired to become involved in politics as it’s the single best way to resolve the great issues of our time. When I was a student in the 90s I already felt that coming out of the Cold War global warming was the next big threat. As a result I joined Green Action and got involved in a number of environmental campaigns, from stopping the construction of bypasses on areas of natural beauty to collecting cans for recycling on campus. What was a minority pastime then is now much more widespread, but our timescales are rapidly shortening.

The burdens of modern media and politics have unfortunately meant that day to day concerns and short term decision-making have overtaken the need for long term strategic thinking. It’s because of this shift that we have to fight doubly hard on climate change issues: by the time it reaches the top of the headlines on a daily basis it will be too late and we’ll be over the tipping point.

I want to always think about the world my children are inheriting and what I can do to help make the changes that will ensure they have a world at least as good as the one I grew up in. There are huge opportunities for the UK in the development and production of low carbon industries, across energy, transport, housing and manufacturing. These sectors can create new jobs and improved livelihoods for communities across the UK, and in doing so inspire new advocates for climate action.

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To make the most of these opportunities – to do things like fixing our regulatory infrastructure or making renewables markets work – we need the political will and ambition. With the right support the UK can not only play our part in the fight against climate change but also be a world leader on the low carbon economy, but it won’t happen without political leadership.

From cutting through the political noise to tackling complex technical knowledge, championing action on climate change won’t always be easy. Being able to draw on specialist expertise, coordinate action and connect with others is vital for successful campaigns. For this reason I am really grateful to be a part of SERA. The breadth of SERA’s environmental knowledge and expertise is incredibly powerful, and as I put the promises of my election campaign and maiden speech into action I’m looking forward to working with members to push for environmental ambition across Parliament and beyond.

As I saw during the election, with enough energy and support we can make a difference. As an MP I intend to do everything I can to do the same on climate ambition.
The challenge is dizzying. The planet is now the system at a pace for which there is no precedent in human history. The challenge. roll demonstrates the unenviable task of transforming this system at a pace for which there is no precedent in human history.

The good news is that decoupling energy from carbon emissions is both technically possible and, via the Paris Agreement, abundantly clear that the pace of change demanded by the Agreement is an important means of consistently emphasising the new, holistic nature of energy policy in Hackney.

To achieve the UK100 goal we have begun by taking matters back to first principles. That means understanding how we procure energy with low demand elasticity, and – increasingly – storage to be banked by heads of service is one way of achieving this in the short-term.

Energy Efficiency

We are in the first stages of implementing a whole-authority energy efficiency framework in line with ISO50001, the highest internationally recognised standard for energy management. Organisations following this standard have achieved reductions in both gas and electricity consumption of up to 20%, whilst also generating up to a three-fold return on investment in Hackney. Savings on this magnitude would translate into £1.3m per year – equivalent to a 2% Council Tax rise – whilst making the decarbonisation challenge much smaller. Collective energy management. Organisations that have implemented ISO50001 have been big industrial users of energy with low demand elasticity, the savings have achieved efficiencies within a local government setting that is perhaps even greater.

Energy Procurement

Hackney currently purchases its energy through the Cabinet Office framework. Despite attractive contract prices, this process also promotes the continued use of carbon-intensive energy, with around 80% of its electricity drawn from fossil-fuel sources. There is therefore scope to make progress towards our decarbonisation target through procurement. Officers are also currently preparing an options paper, focusing on three scenarios:

- The prospect of the Cabinet Office framework setting a minimum target of 50% of energy obtained from renewables within five years
- The cost of Hackney withdrawing from the framework and pursuing its own energy procurement, with a minimum target of 50% renewables within five years
- The number of local authorities that would have to withdraw from the existing framework and form a new, renewables-focused framework to keep administration costs at close to the existing cost.

While the ‘going rogue’ option is very much on the table, collective procurement is obviously more desirable. Local authorities need to begin to think outside the box.

To help us to become a leader in renewable energy procurement, the Hackney Energy Procurement Officer has recently become the 71st local authority signatory to the UK100 Agreement, which commits us to the incredibly stretching target of deriving our energy from 100% renewable sources by 2050.

Thebeauty of decentralised energy is the level of flexibility it provides: Swindon is using surrounding farmland to create solar farms, whilst Enfield is using waste heat from the Edmonton Eco Park. Municipalities which have none of these attributes should look to others for inspiration, such as Lincolnshire County Council, which is using its 4000 miles of verges to produce biogas from waste clippings.

If, excluding housing (which requires its own package of measures), Hackney reduced its corporate consumption of energy by 20%, it would, according to benchmarking the not unreasonable target of 50% renewables from purchased energy, be able to generate a modest 10% of its energy from its own renewable energy generating facilities. If we pursued the offer of conventional energy companies, we would have reduced the carbon intensity of our energy consumption against current levels by approximately 65%. All these measures, with the political will and a relatively small amount of capital investment, could be delivered tomorrow.
The SERA Sunday Lunch Conversation: What Should Labour Fight For in Food and Farming?

Sunday 24 September
12:45 - 14:00
The Dome Room,
Hotel du Vin, Ship Street

This event takes place outside the secure zone - attendees do not need a conference pass

SPEAKERS:
- SUE HAYMAN MP Shadow Secretary of State for DEFRA
- JANE MERRICK Political journalist & allotment blogger
- JAKE SUMNER SERA Co-Chair

VICKI HIRD
Farm Campaign Coordinator, Sustain

BELINDA GORDON
Head of Government and Rural Affairs, Campaign for the Protection of Rural England

RICHARD BENWELL
Head of Government Affairs, Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust

Sustainability Hub Reception with SERA
Monday 25 September
20:00 - 21:30
Hall 7 - Tyne, Hilton Metropole

SPEAKERS:
- REBECCA LONG BAILEY MP Shadow Secretary of State for BEIS
- ALAN WHITHEAD MP Shadow Minister for Energy and Climate Change
- MELANIE SMALLMAN SERA Co-Chair

A Breath of Fresh Air: Labour Leading the Way on Air Quality

Monday 25th September
12:45 - 14:00
The Dome Room, Hotel du Vin, Ship Street

This event takes place outside the secure zone - attendees do not need a conference pass

SPEAKERS:
- RACHAEL MASKELL MP Shadow Transport Minister
- LEONIE COOPER AM Chair of the Environment Committee, London Assembly
- CLLR JUDITH BLAKE Leader of Leeds City Council and Co-Chair, UK100

DIANA HOLLAND
Assistant General Secretary, Transport, Unite

JAMES THORNTON
CEO, ClientEarth

GERAINT DAVIES MP
Rapporteur for Air Quality, Council of Europe

MELANIE SMALLMAN
Co-Chair, SERA

IN ASSOCIATION WITH GREENER UK

The Green Challenge: How Labour Can Champion the Environment Through Brexit and Beyond

Tuesday 26 September, 12:45 - 14:00
The Dome Room, Hotel du Vin, Ship Street

This event takes place outside the secure zone - attendees do not need a conference pass

SPEAKERS:
- SUE HAYMAN MP Shadow Secretary of State for DEFRA
- MARY CREAGH MP Chair of the Environmental Audit Committee

LORD ROOKER
Former DEFRA Minister of State

SHAUN SPIERS (CHAIR) CEO, Green Alliance

IN ASSOCIATION WITH GREENER UK

The SERA Rally: The Green Transformation - Local to Global Leadership

Tuesday 26 September, 18:00 - 19:30
The Dome Room, Hotel du Vin, Ship Street

This event takes place outside the secure zone - attendees do not need a conference pass

Join Labour’s environment campaign at our flagship event to hear five minute visions for a brighter, greener Britain

SPEAKERS:
- REBECCA LONG BAILEY MP Shadow Secretary of State for BEIS
- SUE HAYMAN MP Shadow Secretary of State for DEFRA
- CHI ONWARAH MP Shadow Minister for Industrial Strategy
- MATTHEW PENNYCOOK MP Shadow Minister for Exiting the EU

MARY CREAGH MP Chair of the Environmental Audit Committee

CLIVE LEWIS MP

LISA NANDY MP

ANNELEISE DODDS MP Shadow Treasury Minister

HOLLY LYNCH MP Shadow DEFRA Minister

STEPHEN KINNOCK MP

SEB DANCE MEP

PAUL NOWAK
Deputy General Secretary, TUC

CLLR JUDITH BLAKE
Leader of Leeds City Council

& MORE TO BE ANNOUNCED

CHAIR ED BY

JAKE SUMNER & MELANIE SMALLMAN, SERA Co-Chairs