



# NEW GROUND

SUMMER 2019

Campaigning for environmental change & social justice

# CRISIS POINT

Labour's answers to the  
Climate & Environment Emergency

Wake  
up



**Sue Hayman MP**

*This is a Climate &  
Environment Emergency*

**Liam Byrne MP**

*Municipal Socialism*

**Clive Lewis MP**

*Science tells us our  
Planet is Broken*

# Welcome to our 2019 Summer Edition

PHILLIP FENTON

**What a difference a few months can make! Our last issue of New Ground marked ten years of Labour's Climate Change Act, which was a landmark at its time, aiming to achieve 80% reduction in carbon emissions by 2050, and how we can build on that progress. Fast forward to the Summer of 2019 and the UK now has a new net zero target and one of Labour's key policy commitments is to kickstart a green industrial revolution.**

This hasn't happened overnight. We've seen a massive shift in public concern for the environment which is clearly illustrated in recent polling. On the same day temperatures rose to record highs across the UK, a new ComRes survey showed 71% of the UK public believe the climate crisis is more important than Brexit. And other polls have shown 'the environment' is now above 'immigration', 'housing' and 'terrorism' which was not the case until recently.

What has led to this welcome and rapid change in public opinion? Increased high-profile voices and campaigns. Two are certainly Extinction Rebellion protesters taking over the streets of London and cities across the UK and the compelling and the astounding Greta Thunberg (who we were proud to co-host in Parliament earlier this year) who has inspired hundreds of thousands of school children across our planet to strike for the future of everything we hold dear to us. Extinction Rebellion and the school strikers have led to many new campaigns and campaigners including the

largest climate mass lobby of Parliament we have seen in the UK with hundreds of MPs meeting and listening to their constituents concerns and fears face-to-face. We should also not forget the BBC's Climate Change The Facts programme, the Committee on Climate Change's report, the IPCC warnings and Labour councillors and Labour/SERA members pushing Climate Emergency declarations and putting in place plans to respond.

Politicians can no longer ignore the environment and climate emergency. It was thanks to Labour on the 1st May that Parliament unanimously declared a climate emergency. The Shadow Chancellor and SERA member John McDonnell has said the 'existential threat to our planet is the absolute priority of next Labour Government'. and Jeremy Corbyn questioned Boris Johnson extensively in their first dual in the House of Commons on the Government's plans.

We have seen some fantastic political progress over the last few months with our elected representatives accepting the challenges we face. However, since the 1st May we have not seen anything from the Government on how they plan to respond to the emergency. The hard work is only just beginning, we need new creative ideas, radical plans of action and policy that will rapidly decarbonise our economy whilst creating thousands of new green jobs. This issue of New Ground looks at how Labour can provide that rapid and urgent response to the environment and climate emergency.



**PHILLIP FENTON** is National Organiser for SERA and editor of New Ground. Get in touch at [phillip.fenton@sera.org.uk](mailto:phillip.fenton@sera.org.uk)



## ABOUT

New Ground is published by SERA, Labour's environment campaign [www.sera.org.uk](http://www.sera.org.uk)  
Email: [enquiries@sera.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@sera.org.uk)

If you would like to contribute to future editions or join our mailing list, please contact Phillip Fenton, National Organiser at SERA [phillip.fenton@sera.org.uk](mailto:phillip.fenton@sera.org.uk)

*The views expressed in New Ground are those of the authors and not necessarily those of the editor, SERA its executive or its members.*

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# SCIENCE TELLS US OUR PLANET IS BROKEN

## *FIXING IT REQUIRES RAPID AND RADICAL CHANGE*

CLIVE LEWIS MP

**Getting your head around an existential threat to the entirety of human civilisation is no easy thing. It's why World War Two analogies are often deployed to describe the sheer scale of the challenge the climate crisis presents to us as a society. But in many ways, it's actually the post-war rebuilding that better resembles the type of challenge that confronts us here in the 21st century.**

After the War, we were confronted with a devastated European continent, a global political and economic order in tatters, millions of displaced people, hunger and the looming threat of further conflict with the Soviet Union. In the context of the here and now, much of this is yet to happen (although I would argue the early warning signs are here). And yet we know, according to the science, that systemic ecological and climate shocks are coming. In fact, in the global South they are already here. Arguably, when these shocks start to happen all across the world, global civilisation will be left in a worse state than 1945.

What we therefore need is a pre-emptive Marshall Plan. One that can decarbonise and democratise our economy; reduce consumption and waste; replenish natural habitats; put food and farming on a sustainable footing and build resilience into our democracy in preparation for what we know is coming.

Enter the 'Green New Deal' (GND). Here in the UK the Labour Party has coined the term, 'Green Industrial Revolution'. Whichever you prefer, the key words to note are 'new' and 'revolution', shorthand for radical, systemic change. A bold decree

that the art of the 'politically possible' must now make way for that of the 'scientifically necessary'. Here in the UK that means net zero-carbon by 2030 and zero-carbon by 2050 (on UK consumption figures, not just production) if we want to remain in our 'fair carbon budget' threshold.

But the GND is so much more than just an economic strategy to decarbonise the economy. It's an entirely new political economy whose contents are being constantly updated and debated. It will need to cover everything from health to defence, accounting to law, food security to new democratic national and global institutions. It will need to be a blueprint not just for the problems we face today but also the ones our children will face tomorrow.

Of course, no plan survives contact with reality. The future cannot be predicted exactly. This is exactly why our watch word must be 'resilience' i.e. the ability to endure and then quickly recover from difficulties. We must build it into our economy, our democracy and, if we're honest, most importantly, our people.

In a democracy it's us, the people, who are the most important resource we have. It's our political choices, our decisions to change things, to maintain things, to determine our values, to decide how to respond and how to pre-empt; it's our ingenuity, our compassion and our determination. It's all these things and more that will shape and determine the future of our democracy in these perilous times.

That means an education system fit for purpose. Teaching children, the skills and knowledge they will need to critically assess

and question the world around them. To see through fake news, demagoguery and lies, and possess the confidence to challenge power. To resist the ever-lurking threat of ethno-nationalism. To understand and grasp a world of AIs and the power of data. To be scientifically literate. To understand that history can show us democracy's past failings but cannot alone predict what form future threats will take.

This is the challenge Labour now faces. Grappling with policies not for the 20th century, not even for today, but what we face tomorrow, and that is already here for many parts of the Global South.

The 2017 Labour Party manifesto was in many ways a social democratic reset. It was a reaffirmation of the values we embraced to rebuild Britain after a devastating war. Values which saw public good trump private good. Where the 99% were put before the one.

After 40 years of embracing neoliberal economic dogma, democratic socialist parties across Europe paid a high price for forgetting those basics. If we forget them again, if we fail to step up to transformative change, unparalleled in peacetime history, it will be much more than mere elections we lose.

CLIVE LEWIS MP  
is Shadow Treasury  
Minister for Sustainable  
Economics and Labour  
MP for Norwich South.  
He tweets at  
[@labourlewis](https://twitter.com/labourlewis)



# TESTS GOVERNMENT MUST MEET: *BEGIN A CLIMATE EMERGENCY SPENDING REVIEW AND 'CLIMATE CONVERSATION'*

JAKE SUMNER

**Could 2019 be the watershed year for climate action, marking our awakening? For our sakes, it must.**

Greta Thunberg's compelling voice and her fellow school protestors, the activities of Extinction Rebellion, the BBC's climate film, the Committee on Climate Change's (CCC) report on 2050 net zero and Parliament's legislating for it, local councils declaring a climate emergency and Labour's pushing Parliament to do the same, have all made clear: we must 'tell the truth' on the climate emergency.

However, although awareness is greater than ever, the response is not. Climate complacency is manifest. If we can look back this year and say, 'we got it', we need clear markers of action. Here are five:

- A Climate Emergency Spending Review
- A comprehensive 'climate conversation'
- Creating systemic change not leaving to individual choices
- Championing the benefits net zero delivers
- Building the largest climate coalition

## **Climate Emergency Spending Review**

Currently, the UK won't meet its fourth and fifth carbon budgets. The fourth begins in 2023. Alongside, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change said we've a decade to act. The Government is conducting a Spending Review and an autumn Budget. At what point will these address carbon budgets and the changes required? To cite a Chinese proverb, when is the best time to plant a tree? Twenty years ago. The second-best

time? Today. A Climate Emergency Spending Review (CESR) is needed now.

It tests the new Government's seriousness regarding our greatest existential crisis. While we've seen announcements for a rumoured election and billions for a no-deal Brexit, the climate emergency is ignored. To use a WWII analogy, it's akin to not rearming as war loomed.

Labour representatives, unions and environmental and civil society groups should push for a CESR. If there is an election it can form a centre-piece of a manifesto, underpinning Labour's ambitious programme. A CESR would set the country up for the global climate talks in December and the UK's bid to hold these next year.

What would a CESR entail? A Spending Review assesses all spending, taxes and programmes and sets priorities ahead. A CESR would put this through a carbon reduction lens and support a rapid move to decarbonisation and net zero. It would create much-needed coherence across government policy. Little government spending has a climate change priority. In contrast, 25% of the proposed EU budget for 2021-27 will be climate-related.

Ministers say UK emissions have fallen more than elsewhere. They have but mainly due to the phasing out of coal. Gas emissions are largely static, oil's are rising, and transport's haven't reduced since the 1990s. The rate of reduction is also slowing; last year was the smallest in six years. Too many policies are causing climate harm. Export support backs fossil fuels, such as funding an oil refinery in Bahrain. Why is it not focused on the green

transition? Special rules enable fracking while other policies prevent onshore wind, the cheapest energy. Shockingly, Ministers want to increase VAT from 5% to 20% on home solar-battery systems but not coal. There are countless similar examples.

Leadership shows the way elsewhere. Around half of new car sales in Norway are fully electric, for the UK it's around 2%. Norway also plans all short-haul domestic flights to be electric by 2040.

A CESR requires doing things differently. Shadow Treasury Minister Clive Lewis has put forward departmental carbon budgets while Shadow Transport Secretary, Andy McDonald, has said how they'll work at the Department of Transport.

As the public sector's largest carbon emitter and a huge producer of waste, the NHS estate can be greened with trees planted - an 'NHS forest' - and renewable energy for ambulances to hospitals. Let's us remember that increasing deaths and health conditions are attributable to toxic air.

Shadow Chancellor, John McDonald, has said how the financial system can be greened. Labour's National Education service would underpin a green skills transformation. Retrofitting millions of homes would boost energy efficiency and a Sustainable Investment Board would support the green transformation. Others have good ideas too, including the Green Alliance outlining the benefits of resource efficiency. A CESR would cover every sector, greening transport to homes, energy to agriculture, industrial production to consumer products.

## *Climate complacency is manifest. If we can look back this year and say, 'we got it', we need clear markers of action*

It includes the environmental emergency too. We can re-green Britain, replanting forests and put people at the heart. For every child born and every person taking a citizenship ceremony, let's plant a tree, signalling a connection to our natural world and building roots for our future.

### **Comprehensive Climate Conversation**

People are at the heart of the challenges ahead. There must be ongoing public discussion. Change can't be to people but *with* people, underpinning an ongoing mandate for action.

This requires leadership. The Prime Minister, should lead a 'climate conversation', bringing together the Cabinet, National Governments, Labour and opposition leaders and local leaders in a landmark step. It would show every administration has a role and an ongoing conversation is needed in every community, as Camden has with its Climate People's Assembly. Next year's city-mayor elections, covering 17 million people, can accelerate the conversation.

### **Systemic change**

As the CCC has outlined, moving to zero net carbon is achievable, but it requires systemic change everywhere. However, too often climate discussions, especially in the media, are framed through individual choices. This neo-liberal individualist frame lets government and business off the hook and overlooks the systemic change needed. Too often individual green choices are not easy or affordable. Incentives and regulations can change this. It's why there's been a huge take-up of electric cars in Norway.

The consequences of choices must also be addressed. A Bath University study showed that the health impacts of a car driving in an inner-city area is £16,000 over the car's lifetime, which is a £650m cost in London per annum. This excludes the carbon cost. So, should a product which contributes to climate or health costs have to factor these in, for example should there be a premium on a home built that is not zero-carbon instead of the other way around?

### **Champion the environment future**

We *must* act to avoid the climate consequences, but a zero-carbon economy shouldn't just be an obligation, we should seek to secure it anyway as it brings many benefits - lower utility bills, affordable-to-run homes, cheaper travel, mobility, improved health, saved lives, economic resilience, new industries, skilled well-paid jobs and community investment.

The benefits of the transition must target the 'left behind'. Labour Leader, Jeremy Corbyn, signalled this at the Durham Miners Gala, committing to "Power Up the North" through Labour's Green Industrial Revolution.

Ambitious environmentalism is the way to tackle deep inequalities. It provides a national story and optimistic future. As John McDonald said, it can bring the country together.

### **Climate coalition**

The changes require the broadest coalition and to accelerate the 2050 net zero target. Some say the economic system requires a complete change. It does. But,

countering the problems of capitalism has taken decades from the creating of unions, welfare state and employment rights. Climate change action cannot wait for the 'ideologically pure' system. The climate battle must take place now, using the tools we have like a Spending Review, as well as seeking to remake systems.

It means building the widest coalition and Labour having the widest appeal, as my co-chair Melanie Smallman and former leader Ed Miliband have argued. Labour needs to be in government, to lead change in the UK and internationally, and to build the coalition to counter climate destroyers from President Trump to Argentinian President Bolsonaro. By torching the Amazon, he threatens all our futures. It's a global battle to ensure this doesn't happen. While 2019 could be the year we finally awoke to the climate crisis, we face some of the toughest battles ahead.

Our moment must be seized. As a banner at the climate protests said: "The greatest threat the planet faces is the belief that someone else will save it." A red-green, Labour voice is needed more than ever to champion a people-based, coalition for a sustained, at scale, rapid response to secure a net zero economy.

**JAKE SUMNER**  
Co-Chair SERA  
and former  
Labour adviser  
He tweets at  
[@Policy\\_Jake](#)



# LABOUR LED PARLIAMENT IN DECLARING A CLIMATE EMERGENCY *NOW IT MUST LEAD PARLIAMENT TO DIVEST FROM FOSSIL FUELS*

THANGAM DEBBAIRE MP  
& MATT WESTERN MP

**The five warmest years since records began in 1880 were the last five years. As the climate heats and unravels, our weather systems are becoming more and more volatile. Those who have contributed least to the problem - located primarily in the Global South - are bearing the brunt of the crisis.**

Earlier this year, South Eastern Africa faced the devastating Hurricane Idai, killing thousands and displacing millions, and India has recently endured record and fatal heat waves - above 50°C in many cities. In the UK, this year we have already had more wildfires than any year on record, plaguing some of our most cherished landscapes from Cornwall to the Highlands.

These impacts have prompted the IPCC to call for urgent and unprecedented political action to eliminate greenhouse gas emissions. A legally binding net zero target is a positive step forward but achieving this by 2050 doesn't speak to the urgency of the impacts described above or the UK's marked historical contribution to global emissions.

Such circumstances have necessitated a wave of urgent calls for action from demonstrators and voters across Europe. In May, Labour led Parliament in declaring a Climate Emergency, a world first, and now we're actively planning and mobilising for a Green Industrial Revolution.

In these making these declarations and plans it is important to recognise that the fossil industry is the primary driver of the climate crisis. Just 100 fossil fuel companies and institutions are responsible for over 70% of all emissions since 1988. This is the same industry that knew about

climate change since the 1970s, spends hundreds of millions yearly to buy influence and spread disinformation, and has no plans of changing anytime soon - with just 1.3% of average capital expenditure being used to develop clean energy in 2018.

Fossil fuel giants extract inexcusable subsidy from governments around the world - \$5.3tn per year. The UK is the worst offender in the EU, funding the industry in the form of billions from government, but also investment through our pensions, university endowments and investment funds. This fossil fuel finance must be stopped and instead be reinvested into positive solutions to the climate crisis.

Moreover, a recent paper published in Nature Energy has shown that an additional \$458 billion must be invested annually into low-carbon infrastructure and energy efficiency to contain warming to below 1.5°C. Public and private pension funds can make a vital contribution to this essential investment, resulting in positive impacts on local homes, businesses and communities.

Divestment is also a question of protecting peoples' future economic security. Pensions people have worked all their lives to build are heavily invested in the fossil fuel industry and taking action to limit global warming would devalue these investments rapidly. Losses incurred risk matching those of the 2008 financial crisis if our money is not aligned to a fossil free future. Shifting investments into solutions is therefore a prudent move for climate, people and nature.

For this very reason divestment has the support of unions (and the TUC), Labour councils, and voters. Shifting our

savings is only one ingredient of a just economic transition, whereby workers in decommissioned industries are supported in reskilling or changing jobs, public funding into home decarbonisation and renewable energy rollout is maximised, and efforts are put into sustainability research and development.

The environment is now consistently amongst the nation's top three issues, and with Parliament gridlocked the public want MPs to show leadership in this area. We, as well as calling for full divestment of the parliamentary pension fund, as a majority of Labour MPs have done, we've written to the trustees for a full disclosure of the fund's holdings and positive action to align investments with the Paris Agreement. Yet little progress has been made.

We believe the trustees require a resounding signal from fund members in order to fully divest. This is why we and SERA are asking those Labour MPs who have yet to sign add their name to the Divest Parliament pledge to ensure that Parliament gets its house in order on the climate crisis.

*THANGAM DEBBAIRE*  
MP is a Labour Whip  
and Labour MP for  
Bristol West.  
She tweets at  
@ThangamMP



*MATT WESTERN*  
MP is Labour MP  
for Warwick &  
Leamington.  
He tweets at  
@MattWestern\_

## The pledge

Unmitigated climate change threatens to undermine our economy, shared environment and global security. Under the UK's Climate Change Act and the Paris Agreement, the UK is committed to limiting warming to well below 2°C and to aim for no more than 1.5°C. This requires leaving the vast majority of fossil fuel reserves unburnt, creating the real possibility of fossil fuel assets becoming stranded – with profound implications for the global economy.

We believe Members of Parliament have a responsibility to act on climate change, and a unique opportunity to show

leadership on climate action, responsible investment and the management of climate risk through addressing the practices of our own pension fund.

As MPs past and present, and members of the Parliamentary Pension Fund, we call on the Trustees to uphold their fiduciary duty and take the financial risks of climate change seriously. We ask they quantify, disclose and review the fund's investments in carbon-intensive industries, engage in a dialogue with fund members and managers on responsible investment, and commit to phasing out fossil fuel investments over an appropriate time-scale.

### AS OF 16TH AUGUST 2019, SIGNED BY:

Name	Constituency	Name	Constituency	Name	Constituency
Afzal Khan	Manchester, Gorton	Hilary Benn	Leeds Central	Mike Amesbury	Weaver Vale
Alex Norris	Nottingham North	Holly Lynch	Halifax	Mike Hill	Hartlepool
Alex Sobel	Leeds North West	Hugh Gaffney	Coatbridge, Chryston and Bells Hill	Mohammed Yasin	Bedford
Alison McGovern	Wirral South	Ian Lucas	Wrexham	Naz Shah	Bradford West
Andrew Gwynne	Denton and Reddish	Ian Mearns	Gateshead	Neil Coyle	Bermondsey and Old Southwark
Andrew Slaughter	Hammersmith	Ian Murray	Edinburgh South	Nick Thomas-Symonds	Torfaen
Angela Rayner	Ashton-under-Lyne	Imran Hussain	Bradford East	Owen Smith	Pontypridd
Ann Clwyd	Cynon Valley	Ivan Lewis	Bradford South	Paul Blomfield	Sheffield Central
Anna McMorrin	Cardiff North	Jack Dromey	Birmingham Erdington	Paul Farrelly	Newcastle-under-Lyme
Anneliese Dodds	Oxford East	Janet Daby	Lewisham East	Paul Sweeney	Glasgow North East
Bambos Charalambous	Enfield, Southgate	Jeff Smith	Manchester, Withington	Paula Sherriff	Dewsbury
Barry Gardiner	Brent North	Jenny Chapman	Darlington	Peter Kyle	Hove
Barry Sheerman	Huddersfield	Jeremy Corbyn	Islington North	Preet Kaur Gill	Birmingham, Edgbaston
Benjamin Bradshaw	Exeter	Jessica Morden	Newport East	Rachael Maskell	York Central
Bill Esterson	Sefton Central	Jo Platt	Leigh	Rachel Reeves	Leeds West
Carolyn Harris	Swansea East	Jo Stevens	Cardiff Central	Rebecca Long-Bailey	Salford and Eccles
Cat Smith	Lancaster and Fleetwood	John Cryer	Leyton and Wanstead	Richard Burgon	Leeds East
Catherine McKinnell	Newcastle upon Tyne North	John McDonnell	Hayes and Harlington	Roberta	City of Durham
Catherine West	Hornsey and Wood Green	Jon Cruddas	Dagenham and Rainham	Blackman-Woods	Birmingham, Hall Green
Chris Elmore	Ogmore	Jon Trickett	Stalybridge and Hyde	Roger Godsiff	West Lancashire
Chris Matheson	City of Chester	Jonathan Reynolds	Bradford South	Rosie Cooper	Canterbury
Chris Williamson	Derby North	Judith Cummins	Burnley	Rosie Duffield	Ealing Central and Acton
Christina Rees	Neath	Julie Cooper	Sunderland Central	Rupa Huq	Bethnal Green and Bow
Clive Lewis	Norwich South	Julie Elliot	Ellesmere Port and Neston	Ruth Caddy	Brentford and Isleworth
Dan Carden	Liverpool, Walton	Justin Madders	Westminster North	Ruth George	High Peak
Daniel Zeichner	Cambridge	Karen Buck	Lincoln	Ruth Jones	Newport West
Danielle Rowley	Midlothian	Karen Lee	Bristol South	Ruth Smeeth	Stoke-on-Trent North
Darren Jones	Bristol North West	Karin Smyth	Kingston upon Hull East	Sandy Martin	Ipswich
David Drew	Stroud	Karl Turner	Stretford and Urmston	Sarah Jones	Croydon Central
David Hanson	Delyn	Kate Green	Edmonton	Seema Malhorta	Feltham and Heston
David Lammy	Tottenham	Kate Osamor	Holborn and St Pancras	Shabana Mahmood	Birmingham, Ladywood
Dawn Butler	Brent Central	Keir Starmer	Bristol East	Sharon Hodgson	Washington and Sunderland West
Debbie Abrahams	Oldham East and Saddleworth	Kerry McCarthy	Cardiff West	Siobhain McDonagh	Mitcham and Morden
Diana Johnson	Kingston upon Hull North	Kevin Brennan	Crewe and Nantwich	Sir David Crausby	Bolton North East
Diane Abbott	Hackney North and Stoke Newington	Laura Smith	Kirkcaldy and Cowdenbeath	Stella Creasy	Walthamstow
Dr Alan Whitehead	Southampton, Test	Liam Byrne	Birmingham, Hodge Hill	Stephen Doughty	Cardiff South and Penarth
Dr Paul Williams	Stockton South	Lilian Greenwood	Nottingham South	Stephen Morgan	Portsmouth South
Dr Rosena Allin-Khan	Tooting	Lisa Nandy	Wigan	Stephen Pound	Ealing North
Edward Miliband	Doncaster North	Lloyd Russell-Moyle	Brighton, Kemptown	Stephen Timms	East Ham
Eleanor Smith	Wolverhampton South West	Louise Haigh	Sheffield, Heeley	Stephen Twigg	Liverpool, West Derby
Ellie Reeves	Lewisham West & Penge	Lucy Powell	Manchester Central	Steve McCabe	Birmingham, Selly Oak
Emily Thornberry	Islington South and Finsbury	Luke Pollard	Plymouth, Sutton and Devonport	Steve Reed	Croydon North
Emma Dent Coad	Kensington	Lyn Brown	East Ham	Sue Hayman	Workington
Emma Lewell-Buck	South Shields	Madeleine Moon	Bridgend	Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi	Slough
Fabian Hamilton	Leeds North East	Margaret Greenwood	Wirral West	Teresa Pearce	Erith and Thamesmead
Faisal Rashid	Warrington South	Margaret Hodge	Barking	Thangam Debonaie	Bristol West
Gareth Thomas	Harrow West	Marie Rimmer	St Helens South and Whiston	Thelma Walker	Colne Valley
Ged Killen	Rutherglen and Hamilton West	Mark Tami	Alyn and Deeside	Toby Perkins	Chesterfield
Geoffrey Robinson	Coventry North West	Marsha de Cordova	Battersea	Tonia Antoniazzi	Gower
Geraint Davies	Swansea West	Martin Whitfield	East Lothian	Tracy Brabin	Batley and Spen
Gill Ferriss	Sheffield, Brightside and Hillsborough	Mary Creagh	Wakefield	Tulip Siddiq	Hampstead and Kilburn
Gordon Marsden	Blackpool South	Mary Glendon	North Tyneside	Valerie Vaz	Walsall South
Harriet Harman	Camberwell and Peckham	Matt Rodda	Reading East	Vernon Coaker	Gedling
Helen Goodman	Bishop Auckland	Matthew Pennycook	Greenwich and Woolwich	Vicky Foxcroft	Lewisham, Deptford
Helen Hayes	Dulwich and West Norwood	Matthew Western	Warwick and Leamington	Virendra Sharma	Ealing, Southall
		Meg Hillier	Hackney South and Shoreditch	Wes Streeting	Ilford North
				Yasmin Qureshi	Bolton South East
				Yvonne Fovargue	Makerfield



If your local Labour MP is not on the list send them an email asking them to sign the pledge

DivestParliament.org  
 DivestParliament@gmail.com  
 @MP\_Divest

# NET ZERO: IS IT ENOUGH?

BRYN KEWLEY

**The truth is, none of us know. Many fought hard to change the UK's climate change target from an 80% reduction in greenhouse gases to a 100% reduction. The conceptual jump to net zero by 2050 still gives me quixotic daydreams – we're talking about completely ending the UK's contribution to climate change.**

Labour moved early to its position of net zero before 2050 at its party conference last year. Then, with one eye on her legacy, Theresa May cleared the way for government adoption. But is it enough?

Campaign group Extinction Rebellion (XR) certainly think not. The very fact that we get to ask this question is in part down to their impactful campaigning. Between the eye catching '12 years' in the IPCC report, last year's scarily prolonged hot summer, Greta Thunberg and the success of her 'Freedom Friday' school strikes and the ongoing efforts of David Attenborough – Overton's window of the politically possible has shifted significantly and everyone is talking about climate change.

It's worth remembering that Net Zero was on very few people's minds early last year, no mainstream NGO was campaigning for it, XR didn't exist and Greta was still in school. Huge progress has been made in little over a year with a change in the law to greatly increase the UK's climate ambition. We've come a long way in a very short period of time.

Now it's the nature of campaigning to keep the pressure on, but sometimes you have to celebrate a win. Most of the big NGOs have welcomed the progress to Net Zero, yet others have completely disagreed and called it a 'betrayal', so what's going on?

As part of my work advising Shadow Energy and Climate Change Minister Alan Whitehead I meet regularly with the excellent Chris Stark, CEO of the Committee on Climate Change (CCC), who would update us on Net Zero report as it developed. For months I held concerns over how strong they could make the report, if the date would be 2050, whether a 100% reduction could even be reached, and a myriad of other issues and did what I could to increase their ambition.

When the Labour team were briefed before that CCC report launch not only was the important net zero by 2050 target there, but they'd gone beyond what we had expected suggesting a ban on watering down domestic action with carbon offsetting and unexpectedly including international aviation and shipping as well! I'm sure that all the campaigning and public pushing helped us arrive at this unexpectedly positive result.

It came as a surprise then, when this CCC report was attacked so fervently.

*'Setting a legal target to reach net-zero GHG emissions significantly before 2050 does not currently appear credible and the Committee advises against it at this time.'*

*Committee on Climate Change, 2019*

## What happened?

It's such a rare thing for popular pressure to arrive and capture our imagination just as the Government about to act. Often events happen first, Grenfell, the Salisbury poisoning or the release of the UN report on UK poverty, then Government reacts. Or Government acts first, evoking a policy

like the hostile environment, privatising prisons or outsourcing, and we only hear about the adverse impacts later. The genius of modern climate campaigning is that it's both captured popular imagination and arisen at the same moment that government had paused to think.

This has led rapid consensus from politicians to pass what was 12 months ago an ambitious piece of legislation. Yet today it's derided as not good enough. But what would be good? 2045 as mainstream NGOs Friends of the Earth and Greenpeace are calling for? 2030 the Green Party position? 2025 the XR position? What's realistic and plausible? And more important than picking a target, how do we get there?

## What do we know?

Something needed to happen as the world is currently on track for more than 3°C of damaging global warming around 2100. We know that in 2018 the IPCC said that we have 12 years for the countries of the world to have peaked their emissions and have embarked on a rapidly reducing pathway.

This is sometimes misinterpreted as saying countries must stop emitting in 12 years, but this is when they should have peaked and be on a downward trajectory. The UK with its historical emissions needs to move much faster than the average country.

We know that we are already risking hitting 'tipping points'. Melting ice in Siberia is releasing methane, a potent greenhouse gas. Retreating white glaciers and melting polar ice are reducing the earth's ability to reflect the sun's warming rays back out into space. Each of these feedback loops increase the terrifying



*Huge progress has been made in little over a year with a change in the law to greatly increase the UK's climate ambition. We've come a long way in a very short period of time*

possibility of self-sustaining, rather than just human induced, climate change.

We also know about the potential impacts. One of the most serious is that fresh water currently trapped as ice all over the world is rapidly running into the sea, diluting the salt water near the poles which keeps the oceans circulating. Disturbing this system could have catastrophic consequences. The last time the oceans stopped circulating was during the mass extinction event 66 million years ago in which around 90% of ocean species died.

The stakes are high and the scientists at the IPCC have given us estimates on these kinds of outcomes. If the world can stick to 1.5°C as decided in the Paris Agreement it's estimated to be more likely than not that these events won't take place. Clearly we need to move as quickly as we can.

Greta Thunberg mentioned these tipping points in her speech to Parliament. She said that the IPCC predicted they could be reached in 2030, "unless [by 2030], permanent and unprecedented changes in all aspects of society have taken place, including a reduction of CO2 emissions by at least 50%."

Undoubtedly Extinction Rebellion and others calling for 100% reduction by 2025 have helped inject a sense of urgency into the debate. My worry is that if we end up in a Pyrrhic battle about who's the most green, measured by who can name the earliest date, we'll be missing the point. I have friends who have literally shut down airports who now have to justify their green credentials because they're not sure a 2025 target makes sense.

It's important not to overplay the facts. The world won't burn if we don't reach net zero by 2025. IPCC Report co-author Prof Myles Allen has said that the UK's Net Zero by 2050 is "consistent with a global effort to limit warming to 1.5°C."

We've been here before. In the run up to the Copenhagen climate conference NGOs stated that it was "the last chance to save the world". Despite strong rhetoric, policies couldn't be agreed on, common cause wasn't found and the talks collapsed.

Rather than argue over targets we need to argue over the hard questions of how to make progress. Which policies, what regulation, which industries will be affected, and how do we bring people with us?

*"Targets are helpful, but what we need is policies that actually deliver."*

Alex Sobel MP at PMQs in July

### **A bridge too far**

If a 2025 target means shutting down industries which will not be able to adapt fast enough, rapidly pushing up the cost of energy, stopping people from driving and cutting into people's life choices, will we have beaten climate change? Or have we fallen into the trap of disadvantaging and taking chances away from the very people we mean to help?

We can beat climate change without the damage but it needs time. With help and time industries can thrive in a zero-carbon future, electric vehicles will be cheaper than fossil fuel alternatives, we can insulate millions of homes meaning less fuel poverty and fewer winter

deaths, we can rapidly deploy renewable energy and drive towards a clean green energy grid but it will take a little time.

Personally in a few years I would be in favour of asking the Committee on Climate Change to look again at the 2050 target to search for scientific way forward to move faster, perhaps 2045 or maybe even sooner – but it's science and evidence that should be pointing the way.

As David Attenborough said in parliament recently we need to move as fast as the electorate will let us but we also need to work hard to bring them with us. Otherwise what are we beating climate change for? From the poorest of countries to the richest the game is learning to create fulfilling but sustainable lives. Climate change will damage those who can least afford it, but frantic climate action creating jobs and industries might lead to the same result.

Shades of grey arguments aren't easy to make. Greta is not wrong, the house is on fire and we need to act as fast as we can. But let's be smart about putting the fire out lest we accidentally knock the house down.

BRYN KEWLEY is a member of the SERA executive and advisor to the Shadow Minister for Energy & Climate Change. He tweets at @BrynKewley



# A HOME SHOULDN'T COST THE EARTH

ALEX CUNNINGHAM MP

**We are in the midst of a housing crisis. People are being priced out of the private rented sector, levels of rough sleeping are still outrageously high, the chances of home ownership seem to be coming more and more unrealistic for young people, and there is a dangerous lack of social housing.**

So we need to build homes but we cannot cut corners and compromise on quality as we build a new generation of affordable and social housing that meet the highest environmental and energy standards that people can afford to live in.

It also means we must have bold plans to upgrade existing homes across all tenures to make them as energy efficient as possible and drive down costs particularly for households in fuel poverty.

Standards of house building should be higher than they ever were. Since 2010, the Conservative Government and the Coalition before, have watered down environmental standards for new build homes and axed the programme Labour agreed with the housebuilding industry for all new build homes to be 'zero-carbon' from 2016.

If those standards hadn't been dropped, each new home owner could have saved £600 on their energy bills to date and, unless they are retro-fitted, will cost them £200 extra a year.

By contrast, as well as ensuring new build homes are built to a zero-carbon home standard as soon as possible, Labour wants to prioritise affordable homes in a new zero-carbon homes programme.

We should be ambitious in raising the standards of the homes that people live in and if the housebuilding organisations I speak with are anything to go by, they are just wanting clear instructions from government about the standards they need to meet, and they will get on with it.

The fact we've seen government delay after delay in bringing forward new appropriate building regulations does a disservice to everyone in the sector but particularly to the people who will live in the new homes built.

Getting the fabric of the homes we build right and reducing space heating requirement is a first step in the quality challenge. We must demand the highest possible standards of construction for houses made of the most efficient materials not just to contain energy bills – but to harness the power of new technologies, which can all but remove households' dependency on the national grids. Looking towards these technologies is critical with solar panels, ground and air source heat pumps among others becoming the norm, not a novelty.

If we are to convince people that they can generate their own power, we must highlight the benefits as we move away from traditional, older sources of powering and heating the home that people have become accustomed to.

We also need to take the people with us as we look to new methods of construction – including the unconventional.

Since I've been a Shadow Housing Minister, most organisations – from builders to housing associations, trade unions to

local authorities – who have an interest in house building and construction, have raised the issue of modular housing.

The speed at which these homes can be built, the relatively low cost, and versatility are just three reasons why these could be an option for widespread house building here in the UK.

I'm told that because of these new methods of construction and the ability to create draught free, dry homes in the factory can also drive energy efficiency and comfort levels but we need to convince people.

Whilst I recognise there is still a major job still to be done in existing social housing, it is the private rented sector where we find the most inadequate heating and insulation. There are over three million homes in England within the private rented sector that are below EPC band C and over 250,000 are the least efficient F/G EPC bands.

Not only that, but 42% of the occupants of these least efficient privately rented homes live in fuel poverty and find it often impossible to keep them warm and free from damp.

There has been some limited recent progress. Amendments to the domestic private rented sector regulations introduced a requirement for private landlords to contribute £3,500 towards energy efficiency improvements in the least efficient rented homes.

Whilst this was a higher investment than the UK Government originally proposed, only 48% of F and G-rated properties covered by the regulations are expected

*As well as cutting greenhouse gas emissions and building the energy efficient homes our people can afford to live in, we would be putting more money back into the pockets of renters*

to reach Band E. This means that the cost of heating falls on the tenant, whilst some landlords get away with not ensuring their property is fit for renting out.

Sadly, the scheme is failing, and little is being done about it.

The Committee on Fuel Poverty has recently found that current enforcement levels for the scheme in England are very low, and that Local Authorities do not have access to accurate data that is necessary for efficient enforcement.

The committee concluded that a nationwide landlord register for England is the only means by which properties can be systematically identified and bad landlords in particular can be tackled. I agree.

But even if they knew who to target to drive improvements, local authorities must have the resource to be able to inspect and enforce the law and look after the interests of private renters who have seen their monthly expenditure on rent continually increase over the years with nothing to show for it.

But, it isn't just private rented properties that are an issue – there are millions of other homes. Real decisive action is needed if we are to deal with the issues.

That is why Labour will upgrade four million homes to Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) band C in our first term, investing £2.3bn per year to provide financial support for these households to insulate their homes.

The take up and delivery of insulation schemes will be driven by local authorities

working street to street – addressing one of the main reasons for the UK's poor record on insulation to date - an over-reliance on energy companies and market mechanisms to encourage households to insulate their properties.

I well remember the first Warm Zones set up around 2000 by the last Labour Government. I was a member of Stockton Borough Council and we seized on an opportunity from my then employer Transco (now National Grid) to sponsor the first Warm Zone in the country.

It's door-to-door approach offering loft and cavity wall insulation, resulted in some 17,000 households being lifted out of fuel poverty but also addressed health and other issues. It was replicated across the country and needs to be again.

Improved energy efficiency in buildings since 2004 has strengthened UK energy security, reduced energy supply infrastructure costs, and now saves the typical dual fuel household over £500 per year. But despite these massive benefits, there has been a huge drop in energy efficiency measures, mainly due to a 47% drop in the annual level of investment.

There has been a 95% reduction in the number of insulation measures installed in homes per year between 2012 and 2017. This is the result of the UK government cutting the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) in half and abandoning Labour's flagship energy efficiency programme, Warm Front.

Households are paying between £30 and £35 a year towards eco programmes. I

want us to drive greater value from this cash – take it directly from the energy companies and use local authorities to deliver the programmes where they know best what needs to be done.

Labour will also provide funding to support councils and housing associations to build new homes to Passivhaus standards.

We will tighten regulation of privately rented homes, blocking poorly insulated homes from being rented out and introduce new legal minimum standards to ensure properties are fit for human habitation and empower tenants to act on sub-standard homes.

Addressing the problems in housing and energy will have a positive impact on other sectors.

As well as cutting greenhouse gas emissions and building the energy efficient homes our people can afford to live in, we would be putting more money back into the pockets of renters that are saved from energy bills, we'd improve the health and wellbeing of families by not forcing them to choose between 'heating and eating and we could finally make fuel poverty an issue of the past.

**ALEX CUNNINGHAM**  
MP is Shadow  
Housing Minister  
and Labour MP for  
Stockton North.  
He tweets at  
[@ACunninghamMP](https://twitter.com/ACunninghamMP)



# THIS IS A CLIMATE & ENVIRONMENT EMERGENCY

SUE HAYMAN MP

**For too long the climate crisis and the ecological crisis have been discussed in separate meetings but we know that both of these disasters must be addressed together.**

Species decline is every bit as serious as the threat of climate change and only by addressing both ecosystems and climate do we stand a chance of safeguarding a stable planet for future generations. According to a report by the Government's official advisors, the UK will miss almost all the 2020 nature targets it signed up to a decade ago. A report by the Natural Capital Committee concluded that only half of our habitats meet minimum quality targets set by Natural England, with bees, butterflies, and farmland birds and bats either continuing to decline or stagnating in numbers.

*Without sufficient action to tackle this fragmentation of our landscapes, 40-70% of pollinator species could become extinct*

Conservation charity, Buglife says that without sufficient action to tackle fragmentation of our landscapes, 40 to 70% of pollinator species could become extinct.

You would think that given the state of the crisis faced by our natural world that the Government would be strengthening the infrastructure designed to protect and enhance the environment, but the exact opposite is true.

Natural England is the body responsible for maintaining and protecting England's natural environment. It is responsible for protected sites such as national parks and Sites of Special Scientific Interest, countryside stewardship, helping farmers and landowners enhance the biodiversity of their lands, the marine environment and many more things that make our natural heritage what it is. Since 2010 Natural England's core grant has been halved. Over that time, the agency has gone from more than 2,500 staff in 2010 to just over 1,500 staff at the financial year end 2019, with the bulk of the reduction in the last year. The cuts to Natural England and its inability to carry out many of its basic functions is a key example of the impact of Tory austerity on our environment.

The Tories in government have not only failed to address and take seriously the causes of climate change and species decline, they are failing to prepare the country for the impacts of climate change too.

The Committee on Climate Change Adaptation Sub Committee has said that the Government is not preparing for climate change across a series of key areas including habitats, fires, floods and heatwaves. This puts communities at risk and seriously undermines our infrastructure and security.

Most climate scientists agree that it is now too late to prevent 1.5°C or more of global warming, even in the best-case scenario. Even if we reduced our emissions to zero tomorrow, we are almost certain to overshoot this crucial temperature limit. That is why it is so important that we do not allow adaptation to be side-lined in the debate on climate change as it is so consequential to the lives of some of the poorest and most vulnerable people in Britain and around the world.

I was proud to lead action from Labour on declaring a climate and environment emergency in Parliament on 1st May. Our motion demanded that the Government return with a fully costed, cross departmental plan to address the climate and environment emergency within six months. That means that the Government has until 1st November. This, coupled with the upcoming Budget, will present the first major tests of whether the new Prime Minister and Environment Secretary can couple high rhetoric on the environment with the urgent, systemic action and funding on the scale needed. My team will be working to hold the Government to account in matching its rhetoric on the environment with meaningful support and leadership from the Treasury.

SUE HAYMAN MP  
is Shadow Secretary  
of State for the  
Environment, Food  
& Rural Affairs  
and Labour MP  
for Workington.  
She tweets at  
@SueHayman1



# NEW CLIMATE PERKS SCHEME OPENS UP CLIMATE CONSCIOUS HOLIDAY TRAVEL

SARAH BARFIELD MARKS

**The number of Brits concerned about climate change has reached record levels - now at 80%. More people than ever are looking to take action, and here at 10:10 Climate Action, we're working on innovative solutions to make that possible. When it comes to tackling climate change, we believe there's no such thing as individual action, as every decision each of us makes affects wider social and political changes.**

With flying being the fastest growing source of greenhouse gases globally, collectively reducing the amount we fly is crucial. But time is a huge barrier to opting for flight-free holidays. That's exactly why we came up with Climate Perks; the scheme which enables employers to offer paid 'journey days', empowering staff to choose low-carbon holiday travel. The perfect solution for those who love to travel the world and protect it too.

Government data shows that within the UK 70% of all flights are taken by just 15% of people, and that these 'frequent flyers' are more likely to be professionals with disposable income. Helping to shift these travel habits is the quickest and smartest way to keep carbon emissions from planes in check, whilst ensuring those with the most responsibility to cut down are most empowered to take action

We found in research we commissioned last year that 50% of people are ready to reduce the amount they fly in order to protect the environment, but only 3% of us do. This is in large part because it takes longer to travel on holiday by train, coach or boat instead

flying. But we simply can't ignore flying's heavy climate cost; with a single return flight to Berlin clocking up the same amount of carbon as 13 return trips by train. As time is running out to stay below dangerous levels of global warming, the truth is we don't have a low carbon plane waiting in the wings to zip us across the skies.

Climate Perks works with employers to overcome these barriers and enables climate-conscious professionals and employers to act on their values. It also makes it easier to experience the joys of clean travel, by rediscovering the magic of the journey - whether that's winding through stunning scenery in the Alps or waking up after a night journey in the heart of a new city.

Working for a Climate Perks employer means you can choose clean travel without losing out on hard-earned leisure time, by being offered at least two paid 'journey days' annually to use for holiday travel without heading to the airport. As we move into the 2020s, organisations will be expected to demonstrate more and more leadership around climate action. As an employer, by coming onboard to Climate Perks, you'll be a part of getting climate conscious travel off (or rather on) the ground in the UK.

The workplace is central to modern life and by changing the behaviours of those with regular flying habits we can help initiate the shift away from our jet-setting culture and towards a new carbon conscious society. Research shows that if our peers have reduced flying for environmental

reasons, we are more likely to make the same change ourselves. We're also more willing to support action by government to fairly manage overall demand for flying, in line with climate science.

We designed Climate Perks to begin a cultural conversation around high-carbon travel, and inspire wider, and much needed, behaviour change. It also has the exciting potential to unlock positive change at a national (or even international) scale. The more people choosing grounded travel, the quicker we'll reach the low carbon destination we all want.



**IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN** being a part of this pioneering scheme as either a Climate Perks employee or employer, please register your interest at <https://www.climateperks.com>

**SARAH BARFIELD MARKS** is from 10:10 Climate Action. She tweets at @1010



# FLIGHT OF FANCY

ALEX SOBEL MP

**David Attenborough named young people's attitude towards climate change "a source of great hope" at a recent event in Parliament. But he also delivered a stark message.**

"We cannot be radical enough in dealing with the issues that face us at the moment. The question is: what is practically possible? How can we take the electorate with us in dealing with these things?"

He went on to pick out flights as too cheap and the need to reduce flying as a key policy change. But how can we propose to take away cheap flights and still win an election to implement the policy?

Aviation has long been a thorn in the side of the climate movement. Flying is a fact of modern life and yet it has a greater impact on the climate than almost anything else an individual can do. It's not just that large volumes of fossil fuels are needed to get a plane in the air, but once up many of those emissions are released high in the atmosphere where they do even more damage.

Like Trump's view on the NHS in a US trade deal, no one has known whether aviation is on or off the table in climate considerations. The ambiguity on aviation, baked into the original Climate Change Act, should finally have been cleared up when the Committee on Climate Change Net Zero report (written in part by experts at Leeds University) stated that 'emissions from international aviation and shipping cannot be ignored'.

However, the Conservative Government ignored this advice saying instead that they would work with international agencies like the ICAO.

The aviation sector has made some efficiency improvements but much like the oil and gas lobby, they've yet to take the issue seriously. They should be wary – the now defunct coal power lobby

spent years spinning a yarn about carbon capture and storage without doing much to implement the technology. Now they're political pariahs with stranded assets.

Technologically there are some options – batteries right now are too heavy, but would be the ultimate solution if energy density issues could be worked out. Hydrogen or biofuels present possible options but both come with challenges and early action is needed.

One well considered solution proposed by the New Economics Foundation is a Frequent Flier Tax. This stems from the realisation that 70% of flights are taken by 15% of the richest in society. Over half of the UK population doesn't fly at all, predominantly because they don't have the economic means to. This suggests a very skewed system where the poorest barely fly at all whilst the richest fly frequently releasing greenhouses gasses that impact us all.

The Frequent Flier Tax solution, which I endorse and I think the Labour Party should too, would mean the removal of some current taxes on flights and the implementation instead of a tax which increases for every flight you take in a 12 month period.

This should be a popular measure as the first flight will be untaxed, making it cheaper for the majority of the population who either fly once or never, and makes it more likely that the average family will have a greater chance to travel abroad with all the opportunities to learn and explore that brings. However the second flight will incur a greater tax than the current tax system and will keep growing for each flight taken. A larger tax will apply to longer flights helping keep the tax reflective of real world impact and hopefully reducing the total number of flights taken.

By far the majority of flights are taken by those who fly 20, 30 or 50 times a year, and it will be them (or their businesses) who will pay a significant tax to disincentivise them

from doing so. After all there are plenty of lovely places in the UK to be seen, and whilst I'm sure some business flights are entirely necessary I'm equally sure that some are not.

By linking the tax to a passport number it will be easy to make sure everyone is paying the right level of tax, and those who are making the most pollution are paying the most taxes. It's likely that this new tax should also be joined with incentive for businesses to install internet calling and conferencing services to help facilitate overseas meetings which don't have to be.

A frequent flier tax should underpin a National Aviation Emissions Plan which reduces emissions year on year reinvesting tax receipts in R&D on new fuels and propulsion in aviation and improved rail infrastructure. It would also mean overcoming moving emissions from one airport to another and a strategy to deal with the air quality and noise pollution problems that aviation brings. The long term solution will be through science, innovation and low carbon heavy industries building alternative clean fuel or electrical planes as well as an overall reduction in flying through use of communications technology for business and academia.

The Labour Party, SERA, NEF and others who are serious about reducing aviation emissions should be modelling a Frequent Flyer Tax with the intention of it being included in the next Labour Manifesto.

It's time for aviation to stop flying below the radar on climate change and get it's low carbon ambitions off the ground.

ALEX SOBEL MP  
leads SERA's  
Parliamentary  
Network and is  
Labour MP for Leeds  
North West. He  
tweets at @alexsobel



# RENEWABLE ENERGY

## A KEY CLIMATE SOLUTION

NATHAN BENNETT

**On the face of it, decarbonising our energy system *should* be the easy part of moving to a net zero economy. Renewables are the good news story. The reason we all sighed in relief at the end of the *Attenborough* documentary as he comfortingly told us there is hope; as the cost of wind and solar has fallen dramatically in recent years, and onshore wind is now the cheapest source of new energy on offer to us. Renewables are the golden opportunity to have green jobs, clean energy and lower energy bills.**

But, shifting to an energy system powered by clean electricity is not without its challenges, and it's certainly not devoid of political choices. The challenge is the scale of change and the speed we need to deliver it. The Committee on Climate Change says we need to quadruple the amount of power we get from renewables to reach net zero emissions. That means a huge increase in our renewable energy capacity, nearly trebling the amount of onshore wind capacity and an even higher increase in offshore wind. The CCC says 75GW of offshore wind might be needed by 2050 compared to just over 8GW installed today.

The numbers may sound enormous, but with a long-term approach from government, industry can meet the challenge. The clearest example of the potential of this kind of approach is in offshore wind where a stable, long-term policy framework is enabling over £48bn of investment by companies in new projects

that will mean offshore wind provides at least a third of UK power by 2030.

New renewables deployment is not just achievable, it's desirable. The costs of onshore wind, for instance, have fallen so far that energy bills would be £50 cheaper for every home in the country if we developed onshore wind at the level recommended to reach net zero.

Industry experts expect offshore wind to follow this path in the 2020s, alongside solar power. To put it into context, the CCC estimates that mainstream renewables like solar, offshore and onshore wind – which are already competitive with or cheaper than fossil fuel generation – will be at least a third and up to half the price of fossil fuel and other low carbon power sources by 2025. Similarly, investing in our energy networks and developing new markets for flexible, smart energy services could reduce average household energy bills by £30 to £90 annually, according to the National Infrastructure Commission.

However, policy on renewables needs to progress rapidly in the next few months. This urgency becomes clearer when you realise how much of the transformation in the wider economy to reach net zero is predicated on increasing and decarbonising the energy sector first, particularly the electrification of transport and heating.

The recent Progress Report from the Committee on Climate Change showed that in the last year, the Government

has only fully implemented one of 25 policies recommended by the Committee to meet our existing carbon budgets, let alone net zero.

I felt a mixed emotion of sadness and inspiration when I recently met an engineering graduate who is giving up on a career in renewables. She told me she signed up to the course to be a part of tackling climate change but quickly realised that our problem isn't technological, it's political, and is now putting all her efforts into campaigning.

When it comes to onshore wind, it's hard to disagree with that young engineer's diagnosis of the problem. The barriers thrown in the way of new onshore wind has led to installations last year plummeting to the lowest level since 2011. In addition to planning restrictions, onshore wind and solar are banned from bidding for Government-backed power contracts. There are companies and communities that want to build new low carbon infrastructure in places with local support but can't make that investment unless the Government removes the barriers and creates a level playing field for these technologies.

The situation becomes all the more frustrating when you look at where the public are on climate action. The Government's own polling shows that public concern over climate change is at the highest level on record, as public support for developing onshore wind at 79%. When we dig deeper into polling,

## *The Government's own polling shows that public concern over climate change is at the highest level on record*

we see that support for onshore wind – and renewables generally – is solid across demographic groups, political parties and even across the leave-remain divide. The Government is stacking the deck against onshore wind and as a result, is needlessly slowing down the low carbon transition and pushing up costs.

That transition to renewables also gives us the opportunity to do things differently in the energy sector. Instead of building large, fossil fuel power plants next to our big cities, renewables has brought investment across the UK and decentralisation of the energy sector. In offshore wind, for example, 90% of the investment in the last five years has been in capacity outside of the South East of England. Onshore wind, with development heavily focused in Scotland. People now have the opportunity to invest in energy at the community and individual level, be it through installing a home solar panel, building a community turbine or investing in a crowd-funded renewable project.

Of course, the barriers that these technologies now face are also impacting the development of community and crowd-funded projects. And that's before we consider the impacts of scrapping of support tariffs for small scale renewables and the proposed VAT hike for solar and batteries. We know that smaller scale technologies aren't able to match the lowest prices we see for large-scale renewables and the community-led schemes can struggle with the financing and risks that developing

renewable energy capacity involves, and current policy won't change this.

Similarly, there is a black hole in policy to support the development of innovative renewable technologies like wave, tidal stream and floating offshore wind. Each of these technologies have their own unique benefits in balancing the grid, supporting our path to net zero, and, importantly, providing thousands of green jobs and placing the UK as a world leader in the global market for each.

Building new renewables will require partnership between industry, government, people working in the sector and the communities where new infrastructure will be based, and will be of benefit to all.

Ed Miliband is right to say we need to change and move beyond nightmarish rhetoric when we talk about climate change. Let's paint the dream. Jobs in the offshore wind sector are set to treble in the next decade. The high-wage, high-wage jobs, and the investment provided by industry are transforming towns and cities outside London. If you want to see the first signs of this, go to Grimsby, Hull, Lowestoft or the Isle of Wight, where investment in new industry is revitalising historic ports. Firms developing offshore wind have set up a £100m fund to support the competitiveness of the UK supply chain, increased the UK content target for new offshore wind farms, are investing in innovation, increasing exports, and setting targets for women and BAME in the workforce. We could

see so much more investment like this and thousands more jobs in onshore wind, floating offshore wind, marine and solar if the Government established a supportive policy framework for them too.

In the face of a climate catastrophe, there are voices calling for decarbonisation to happen much faster. Others are interested in increasing UK content requirements for government energy contracts, or even local or national content. Is there potentially some room for local co-ownership too? Not everyone in political movements or clean industries or environmental campaign groups will agree on the mix of technologies we need or how government should prioritise objectives.

However, we know that if we want energy policy to support wider objectives – like creating high-value jobs, developing new clean industries and community energy – it will require political decisions and investment. The question for politicians is whether they see that investment as a cost or recognise the value it adds to our economy?

*NATHAN BENNETT*  
is Senior Public  
Affairs Manager  
at RenewableUK  
He tweets at  
[@nathansbennett](https://twitter.com/nathansbennett)





# CCS IS CRUCIAL FOR A GREEN INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

REBECCA BELL

**I feel I need to get this out of the way: carbon capture and storage (CCS) isn't popular, and a lot of people think it isn't necessary. I used to think the same way – that it was just a way to keep fossil fuel power going, that all we needed was more renewables, and that CCS is too expensive and not technically proven.**

As with many things, it's a bit more complicated than that. The turning point for me was when someone explained all the ways that CCS can open the door to a zero-carbon future. For a start, CCS isn't just about power; in fact, it's barely about power at all. CCS is primarily about industry. Greenhouse gases are an unavoidable result of industrial activity, and CCS enables factories to manufacture goods without emitting CO<sub>2</sub>. It also has a role to play in producing hydrogen from methane, which has the effect of providing an energy vector that can power cars and heat homes, without giving off any CO<sub>2</sub> when it's used. Finally, CCS will enable 'negative emissions', either by removing CO<sub>2</sub> from directly from the air, or removing it indirectly from the atmosphere by capturing CO<sub>2</sub> that has been stored in plants through photosynthesis, which are then used for things such as fermenting, distilling or bioenergy.

CCS describes a set of technologies for capturing, transporting and securely storing carbon dioxide. Capture involves removing the CO<sub>2</sub> from a stream of gases, using chemicals, membranes or solid materials that separate the CO<sub>2</sub> from the other gases that are present. The pure

CO<sub>2</sub> is then compressed and transported to a storage site. This can be done by pipeline (in much the same way that North Sea gas is brought ashore), or, for smaller amounts, by ship or rail. The CO<sub>2</sub> is finally injected into porous, permeable rocks, over a kilometre below the seabed, where it is held in place, permanently, by a combination of surrounding, impermeable rocks and chemical reactions.

Much research has been done, and continues to be done, to prove the security of geological CO<sub>2</sub> storage and to enable leaks to be detected. The UK has some of the best understood geology in Europe, and a very clear idea of how CO<sub>2</sub> behaves in the subsurface, so we can be confident that storage will be permanent.

Part of CCS's image problem is due to the reasons the Conservative government gave for cancelling CCS funding in 2015. CCS is expensive, yes – in the sense that it is cheaper to just pollute the atmosphere with carbon dioxide than it is prevent that pollution happening; it certainly isn't more expensive than cleaning up the environmental and social damage caused by climate change. It's also expensive in the sense that any new endeavour will be expensive when it is done for the first time. As CCS is put in place, costs will come down.

Carbon capture and storage has to be central to Labour's plans for a Green Industrial Revolution, otherwise the UK won't have any industry. Industry as it is today simply cannot operate in a net

zero-carbon world – and the party's goal of increasing the UK's manufacturing base and ending reliance on imports would only exacerbate the problem, if a way of deeply cutting emissions isn't used.

*Industry accounts for around 20% of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions*

Industry accounts for around 20% of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions, and industrial emissions of CO<sub>2</sub> can be categorised in two groups: emissions from fossil fuels, and process emissions. Fossil fuels are used where high temperatures are needed, for example in glass furnaces: they are burned to provide this heat, and emit CO<sub>2</sub> (and other gases). With fossil fuel emissions, energy efficiency is an obvious first step, but it can only marginally reduce emissions, unless the factory was very inefficient to start with. There are also options to use a different energy source, such as electricity, which would provide the heat with the CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, as long as the electricity was from renewable – and this could mean conflicts with other growing electricity uses, such as for cars and home heating. Electrification – and the factory redesign that would have to come with it – would be expensive, and it might not even be possible for very high temperatures.

*As well as being an enormously high-emitter, cement is an essential product: without it we can't have homes, infrastructure or renewable energy*

CCS, on the other hand, would enable an existing factory to use its existing processes, with additional plant to capture the CO<sub>2</sub> they give off.

Process emissions – such as the CO<sub>2</sub> that is given off as part of the process of converting limestone to lime for cement – are harder to deal with, as they are integral to manufacturing operation. In the case of cement, around 50% of emissions are from the calcination process and cement accounts for around 8% of greenhouse gas emissions globally. The only option for decarbonising process emissions is to use CCS to prevent the CO<sub>2</sub> reaching the atmosphere or ceasing production.

As well as being an enormously high-emitter, cement is an essential product: without it we can't have homes, infrastructure or renewable energy, and it makes sense to make it in the UK rather than import it. Steel is similarly essential, and also high-emitting: another product where low-carbon, UK manufacture would be preferable to potentially high-carbon imports.

Another major industry with process CO<sub>2</sub> emissions is petrochemicals – and protecting this industry with CCS butts up against issues around single-use plastic and throwaway products. This is where difficult decisions need to be made about the kinds of industry we prioritise – and for the sake of the planet, those decisions can't be left up to the market.

The UK needs an industrial strategy – it needs a clear direction, and a clear vision of the kind of industry, and the

kind of economy we want to see. This means making decisions about which industries we retain, and which we allow to decline – accompanied with a clear plan and action to help workers transition to low-carbon, well-paid, unionised jobs.

The UK simultaneously needs rapid roll-out of CCS to decarbonise its industries, and to enable new industrial production to be low-carbon from the start. CCS infrastructure – to take the CO<sub>2</sub> away from the factory gate to be stored securely and permanently – needs to be available for all industrial plants to connect to, just like waste collection and sewerage.

Fortunately, Labour is ideologically in the right place to develop this: experts have shown that public investment in, and public ownership of, the transport and storage infrastructure is the most effective way to get it in place. Unfortunately, the party in government is unwilling to take on the public investment that is needed, and is instead wasting time searching for a different business model that might work. In the meantime, greenhouse gas emissions are rising, and our chances of limiting global temperature rise to 1.5°C are shrinking.

The UK has an opportunity with CCS that governments have failed to grasp with renewables – to build a supply chain and a body of expertise that can be exported around the world. Every country with industry or fossil fuel power generation is going to need CCS in order to comply with the Paris Agreement, and UK engineers, geologists, chemists and manufacturers can be the people to provide it.

Storing CO<sub>2</sub> in offshore geological formations, including depleted oil and gas fields, will need broadly the same skills and people as exploring and taking out the oil and gas in the first place. This means that rather than losing their jobs as production winds down, and having to retrain in a new field, offshore oil and gas workers can transition from extraction to storage. Likewise, workers in high-emitting industries, and the supply chains that depend on them, can be secure that their jobs will be able to continue in a net zero future. New jobs will be created in the global CCS supply chain, and in industries – whether privately or publicly owned – that locate in the UK in order to take advantage of the infrastructure that allows low-carbon production.

There is so much to be gained from investing in CCS, and in our manufacturing future. The sooner we get started with CCS, the sooner we will reap the benefits. The longer we wait, the harder it will be to meet the global climate goals. A green industrial revolution and a just transition need to start now. I hope to see CCS at its heart.

REBECCA BELL  
is Vice-Chair of  
SERA Scotland.  
She tweets at  
@MissBeccsBell



# RESTORING NATURE TO TACKLE *THE CLIMATE CRISIS*

ADAM BARNETT

**Our environment and climate are locked in twin crises. The rate of species extinctions is accelerating and we're on track to miss our emissions targets by a huge margin (including our shiny new 2050 target). It's undeniable that urgent action is needed so the next step must be to take Labour's enthusiasm and the current political consensus, and drive through the immediate implementation of a suite of radical policies.**

When thinking about woolly 'future' problems, it's easy to attribute woolly solutions. Instead of relying on the vague potential for technology-driven 'negative emission' fixes or geo-engineering, we need to be looking closer to home for inspiration. As close as your back garden or local park, in fact. There's a handy 'negative emissions technology' that's been around for quite a while now. It's called photosynthesis. The best way to suck carbon out of the atmosphere is by restoring nature – like planting trees or expanding wetlands. No need to rely on Jurassic Park-style genetic hoarding. Nature already contains all the solutions and more that are needed to tackle the twin climate and ecological crises.

We call these 'Natural Climate Solutions'. It might just sound like more jargon, but it describes the umbrella of tools that nature can wield to fight climate change. These 'solutions' include landscapes such as peat bogs, ancient woodland, wetlands and permanent grasslands, all of which provide valuable habitats for wildlife whilst sucking carbon out of the atmosphere when managed correctly. However, when managed

incorrectly, these landscapes degrade and turn from being vital carbon sinks to sources of emissions, as their carbon stores are released into the atmosphere.

The RSPB recently undertook a piece of research to map these carbon-rich and 'best for wildlife' landscapes across the UK. We found that the total carbon stored in these landscapes amounted to two gigatons of CO<sub>2</sub> (2000 million tonnes). This is equivalent to the annual carbon footprint of 275 million EU citizens, or alternatively four years of the UK's total greenhouse gas emissions. Though even this gargantuan figure is a vast underestimation due to the realistic limitations of the data available. One example of these limitations is the fact that we can only assess data on the top 30 centimetres of soil – but some peat bogs reach a depth of 10 meters.

Our research identified sites across all corners of the four countries – from large uplands in Scotland and the north of England to countless smaller areas, such as patches of ancient woodland and wetlands in Wales and Northern Ireland. However, of the two gigatons of carbon that we found stored in these landscapes, 66% lies outside of areas that are protected for nature (such as National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty – AONB's). This means that they are receiving no specific, additional support or legal protections against damage. These vital landscapes are being degraded in a number of ways including through over or under-grazing, invasive species, commercial forestry, intensive agriculture and management for grouse moors. These

landscapes are vulnerable and in many cases their condition is ever worsening. The result? The huge stores of carbon they have accumulated over several centuries is rapidly leaking into our atmosphere and wildlife is being lost.

The story gets worse. Even when a landscape does possess some form of specific legal protection, it's condition (whether it is healthy or not) is still a huge cause for concern, to the extent that carbon is being routinely lost from these protected sites due to the rate of soil and vegetation damage. The Government's own data shows that only 40% of protected areas are in good condition. We therefore can only assume that the condition of the unprotected land is even worse but we can't prove this as they don't even receive any monitoring or assessment!

Perhaps the most shocking finding is that SSSIs (Site of Special Scientific Interest) inside England's National Parks and AONBs are, on average, in a worse condition than the SSSIs outside of these protected landscapes. For example, 12% of SSSI's in the North Yorkshire Moors and 16% in the Peak District are in good condition compared to 43% SSSI's being in good condition that are outside of National Parks and AONBs. This is despite National Parks and AONB's having statutory purposes to protect and enhance nature (though their condition is often due to over-tourism and lack of funding).

Not all SSSI's in protected areas are equally bad however. SSSI condition in the three lowland National Parks – the

## *To restore nature and mitigate climate change, Labour must be bold and propose a radical manifesto for nature's recovery and the protection of the UK's vital carbon and wildlife-rich landscapes*

Broads, New Forest and the South Downs – and some AONBs is better although significant improvement in these areas is nonetheless needed. Dragging the average down considerably are several upland areas where the cumulative effect of decades of intensive agriculture and grouse moor management practices is eroding the ability of habitats to store carbon and support wildlife. Damaged peatland in England's uplands releases the equivalent carbon of 140 thousand cars annually, and 75% of this is the direct result of the vegetation on the peatland being burnt. This is done to encourage new heather growth to support increasingly large populations of grouse for shooting.

**But all is not lost! To restore nature and mitigate climate change, Labour must be bold and propose a radical manifesto for nature's recovery and the protection of the UK's vital carbon and wildlife-rich landscapes.**

For peatlands, this must include a ban on the burning of blanket bogs (replacing the current ineffective system of voluntary agreements) and the planting of trees on peat, halting the use and sale of peat-based products in horticulture, and rapidly increasing funding for peatland restoration.

Areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland must be protected and restored, and tree planting expanded drastically (abiding by a 'right tree in the right place' approach, with an emphasis on creating nature-rich habitats using native tree species). We should avoid further conversion and 'improvement' of our remaining permanent grassland, as

well as revert more land back to this state. National Parks and AONBs should have a statutory duty to manage the land for carbon and nature, with the associated agencies (such as Natural England) being much better resourced and having improved governance structures to deliver this.

Carbon and nature rich areas should be included in the 'Nature Recovery Network', a set of spatial maps that will inform local planning decisions, alongside the mandatory implementation of the 'biodiversity net gain' principle for all new developments.

*To restore nature and mitigate climate change, Labour must be bold and propose a radical manifesto*

We need to see a UK Agriculture Bill that prioritises the preservation of nature, accompanied by a new Environmental Land Management Scheme that funds the restoration, creation and maintenance of nature and carbon-rich habitats. And above all else Labour must continue to push for a genuinely ambitious Environment Bill that includes legally binding targets for nature's recovery, with five year milestones outlining how to get there, including targets for the restoration of upland and lowland bogs and wetlands.

Labour also has to play a leadership role to align these bills with the other countries around the UK as they replace their agricultural and environmental laws too - so nature, farmers and communities get the best deal no matter where they are.

Earlier this year, figures including Greta Thunberg, Naomi Klein and Rowan Williams signed a powerful joint letter stating that 'by defending, restoring and re-establishing crucial ecosystems, a very large amount of carbon can be removed from the air and stored. At the same time, the protection and restoration of these ecosystems can help to minimise a sixth great extinction'.

Never has the urgency to act been greater – nor the route that's needed to be taken more obvious. Natural climate solutions wrap up countless win-wins and offer a unique opportunity to fight both the environmental and climate crises, at the same time presenting a positive vision for the preservation of our precious landscapes and the wildlife that call it home. Securing nature's recovery requires brave and visionary leadership and Natural Climate Solutions must play a key role in this.

ADAM BARNETT  
is Senior  
Parliamentary  
Officer at RSPB.  
He tweets at  
@admpbntt



# THE TRADE UNION CASE FOR A JUST TRANSITION TO A CLEANER, GREENER ECONOMY

TIM PAGE

**Over the past 12 months, the scale of the climate emergency that we face has become clear.**

Was there one defining moment? Was it last October's report by the Intergovernmental Conference on Climate Change (IPCC), warning us that we have just 12 years to limit global warming to 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, the ambition of the 2015 Paris Agreement? Perhaps it was the inspirational actions of Greta Thunberg, whose school strikes for climate began in Sweden but have inspired children across the world? Could it have been the young Democratic Congresswoman Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who has captured the imagination of progressives with her call for a 'Green New Deal'.

Maybe it was a combination of all three. Whatever it was that has woken us up, there is a general consensus that we need to act – and quickly – if we are to save our planet. In May, the UK's Committee on Climate Change (CCC) argued that we must adopt a policy of achieving a net zero-carbon economy by 2050. In June, in one of her last acts as Prime Minister, Theresa May committed the government to this target.

The TUC is a strong supporter of action to end global warming. Along with the wider international trade union movement, we fully endorse the aims of the Paris Agreement. We accept the fact that the whole economy will need to adapt if net zero is to be achieved. And we are, of course, the voice of working people. This means we have a particular

responsibility to champion the cause of a just transition to a new economy.

In June, the former Labour Leader and former Environment Secretary, Ed Miliband – now co-chair of the IPPR Environmental Justice Commission - noted that many progressives had previously separated climate change and inequality. He was right about that. The best way to tackle poverty and inequality is to create good jobs. The task before us, then, is simple enough to understand: we need a just transition so that those workers in highly skilled, well paid, unionised jobs in high carbon sectors get the chance for great new jobs in the greener economy of tomorrow.

*The best and most obvious way to engage with workers is through their trade unions. As well as being fair, this makes business sense*

In pursuit of this end, we at the TUC published our report, 'A just transition to a greener, fairer economy' in July. This report was a year in the making, beginning with a set of principles around which unions coalesced, and developing into clearer asks of government. We then took our report to workplaces around the country, meeting with the workers in the

front line, those in the power stations and energy companies who, as we move towards a net zero economy, can expect to see their industries transition. They offered valuable insights and recommendations, but none tried to deny the importance of the move to a greener economy. In turn, we must not let them down. It is essential that, as the TUC report says, we develop "a different approach to the failed neoliberal approach of the 1980s, which left workers behind, and communities devastated".

So how to bring about a just transition? The TUC's report makes four recommendations.

First, we need a clear and funded path to a low carbon economy. UK unions have long supported a balanced energy policy and an affordable energy supply for the whole country. In the context of a move to net zero, this means we need a cross party commission on long term energy use, involving affected workers, unions, industries and consumers. As part of its remit, this commission should carry out a study of the social impacts of such a transition, its regional impacts and necessary mitigation measures. We need, of course, government investment, delivered through progressive taxation, to deliver new forms of energy. But we also need government investment in infrastructure and to support transition in affected sectors including automotive, aerospace, steel and construction, as well as household energy efficiency programmes and better public transport.

## *The TUC is a strong supporter of action to end global warming. Along with the wider international trade union movement, we fully endorse the aims of the Paris Agreement*

Second, and crucially, workers and communities across the UK who are most affected by the move towards low carbon industries, must have a central voice in how this is brought about. This is obvious, but bears repeating. Workers' attitudes towards change is very different if it is something done with them, rather than something done to them. The best and most obvious way to engage with workers is through their trade unions. As well as being fair, this makes business sense. Workers have transition-related knowledge; a company transitioning to cleaner technologies will have to adapt specific processes and workers are most likely to understand how to do this effectively.

Companies should put in place Transition Agreements – agreed with unions – covering issues such as numbers of jobs, pay and conditions, job security, training and skills, health and safety and equal opportunities. Just transition arrangements should also be covered in bargaining at sectoral level.

Third, workers need the skills and expertise to help their companies transition to lower carbon models. We will also need to develop new skills across the workforce for new types of roles. This means that government must dramatically increase its investment in skills.

Apprenticeships are vital and the trade union role in safeguarding the quality of apprenticeships has been crucially important. Government should establish lifelong learning accounts for all adults

so that everyone has a personalised budget for training, as well as introduce a right to career reviews and face-to-face guidance on training to help them access it. Those who have left work need the support of a decent social security system to ensure their living costs are met while they train for new roles.

Fourth, new jobs must be good jobs. Decarbonising the economy will create massive employment opportunities, so this should be a good news story. Our ambition is that every new job created is just as good as those which it will replace. That means trade union recognition, decent pay, terms and conditions, high standards of health and safety, and a fair pension. Anything less does not meet the test of a just transition. Good employers know this, but government has a role to play too.

*Halting climate change, ... will not be easy or cheap. Some will say that we can't afford to do it. The TUC says that we can't afford not to do it*

When ministers invest taxpayers' money in new infrastructure, they should use their procurement powers to ensure that jobs

generated benefit workers in the local community and throughout the supply chain. A robust industrial strategy must focus on creating jobs where they are needed most – in the regions and nations of the UK. The UK must retain a strong manufacturing base and must not simply export carbon-intensive jobs overseas.

This is a challenging agenda. Halting climate change, transforming our industries and creating great new jobs across the UK, will not be easy or cheap. Some will say that we can't afford to do it. The TUC says that we can't afford not to do it.

The CCC is right to say that the UK, as the cradle of the industrial revolution, started the process of industrial pollution and we have a particular responsibility to be at the forefront of ending it. We have other responsibilities too: to the workers who need and deserve great jobs; to the populations of the Global South, who suffer most from rising temperatures; and to our young people, in the UK and across the world, who simply and rightly will not take 'no' for an answer.

TIM PAGE is a Senior Policy Officer leading on industrial policy, energy and climate change at the TUC.



# FOR THE SAKE OF OUR PLANET *WE NEED A FRACKING BAN*

STEVE MASON

**“Ban Fracking”. These are the words that should be on the lips of every environmental activist, campaigner and politician in the UK because if fracking gets a foothold, our commitment to a fossil fuel dependent economy will be sealed for decades. If that happens, the UK can kiss all climate change targets goodbye.**

It is clear that developing any unconventional oil and gas industry in the UK will result in unacceptable negative impacts on the environment, local communities and democracy, energy security, health and existing economies. This is especially at a time that the Government should instead be urgently developing policies and infrastructure to provide a clean and sustainable carbon free vision for Britain that is so desperately needed.

Over the past few years, the campaign against fracking has continually rebuffed industry claims and projections in every arena possible. It has systematically taken apart the Government policy piece by piece, but the fossil fuel lobby will never give up until we have secured a ban in the UK. The latest ‘hard sell’ from the industry is in response to the growing awareness of the climate emergency. This new level of focus on climate change has given the frackers a headache as it is fast becoming obvious that society must keep fossil fuels in the ground. Their answer to this headache is to greenwash fossil fuels, with a narrative that fracking is needed to tackle climate change and to help the UK reach net zero. I kid you not!

In the current climate emergency, fracked gas has no place as a bridging fuel in the country’s much-needed transition to a low carbon economy and the industry is far from ever going to meet the three tests set out by the Committee for Climate Change. These points must be raised at every level, especially now as the Government’s own national planning policy on this issue has now been found to be unlawful.

In May 2019, High Court judge Mr Justice Dove, issued a judgment which declared that a newly-added paragraph of the National Planning Policy Framework relating to onshore oil and gas development, including fracking was in fact, unlawful. This key paragraph has now been quashed by the judge and subsequently removed from the planning framework.

Local authorities and policy makers now do not have to specifically ‘recognise the benefits of on-shore oil and gas development, including unconventional hydrocarbons for the security of energy supplies and to support the transition to a low-carbon economy’. Crucially now, authorities do not have to facilitate the exploration and extraction of unconventional hydrocarbons as directed before. Furthermore, the ministerial statements relating to this issue are to be seen as only advisory and can be deviated from if sufficiently justified.

Therefore, any and all public bodies should listen to and consider all the evidence before creating policy and making plans. They can take a position against fracking in any plans, investments and policies and question the logic of backing fracking.

This comes at a time where we see fast developing change to both the climate change agenda and all that feeds into it. The UK will need to invest heavily in the national energy infrastructure, the distribution network, energy storage, whilst at the same time reducing gas use. The UK will need to continue ensuring emissions keep falling to arrive at net zero, whatever direction that the current disjointed national policy takes us.

The shale gas industry is not in any position to significantly contribute to the UK’s energy mix without significant expansion in either the near or medium term. Its development, irrespective of how optimistic the industry projections are, just isn’t viable without intensive lobbying, favourable policy and regulation changes.

The record to date in the UK does not bode well. Actions include taking out an injunction against any protests and threatening to pass costs to individual local residents, sidestepping local decision makers, threatening legal action against landowners who refuse to allow access to their land - including against the National Trust.

By stating their intention to frack in or under some of the most protected areas of England, such as the North Yorkshire Moors National Park, and position multi well sites as close as possible around the perimeter of such areas is a clear indicator of the disregard and intention of the companies to frack wherever they want, even in the face of opposition from the National Park Authorities.

## *Local communities up and down the UK will never be persuaded to welcome fracking in their area, despite repeated efforts to entice them*

The fracking companies have also been key in lobbying government ministers to relax environmental protections including around waste water treatment such as reinjection into wells, disposal in rivers and seas to reduce costs and the earthquake regulations. These earthquake regulations were created in collaboration with the companies and have proved to be extremely effective in protecting communities from tremors, but the inability of the companies to control the frack safely is apparent and it is these regulations in particular that are now the subject of intense lobbying by the industry with the aim to obtain deregulation of their own safe limits.

*The fracking companies have also been key in lobbying government ministers to relax environmental protections including around waste water treatment*

Local communities up and down the UK will never be persuaded to welcome fracking in their area, despite repeated efforts to entice them with 'shale gas dividends' and promised pay-outs from speculative industry profits. Not a single community threatened by this industry has

come out in favour of having fracking on their doorstep. On the contrary, wherever fracking is proposed, local people mobilise to do whatever they can to stop this industry in its tracks. Every planning application related to fracking results in hundreds, if not thousands of objections.

Furthermore, the Government's attempts to fast-track fracking by subverting the democratic planning process through permitted development has created a huge backlash, alienating residents, communities, councils and Conservative MPs alike.

It may seem to many that fracking has simply gone away, beaten back, never to return and the industry has been repelled repeatedly to the credit of campaigners across the country. But we cannot be complacent, as fracking is still in the spotlight.

In Lancashire, near Blackpool, Cuadrilla are intent on continuing to frack despite an earthquake of magnitude 2.9 being recorded in August. Third Energy in North Yorkshire are applying to extend their licences by 17 years to 2035. And INEOS, the plastics giant and the biggest fracking licence holder is involved in courtroom battles and public inquiries in an attempt to start fracking.

If we are to be serious about tackling climate change then it is an imperative that every method at our disposal is used to halt fracking and to ensure it does not gain a foothold in the UK. Climate Change needs to be tackled urgently and fracking is environmental danger.

At every level our politicians must continue to try to put as many blocks in place as possible. We must use motions at local level to encourage local authorities to take a presumption against fracking. At national level, we must with MPs and ask them to lobby hard for a change of direction on this foolhardy pursuit of fossil fuels, and to sign the Frack Free United pledge.

With over 30 constituencies impacted by fracking licenses, constituencies that could be decided by a swing of a just over a couple of thousand votes, it leaves me in no doubt that fracking will be a major influence in any forthcoming general election.

We are ready... are you?



*FOR MORE INFO ABOUT* the latest council motion campaign, the Frack Free United pledge and how fracking affects your area please go to [www.frackfreeunited.co.uk](http://www.frackfreeunited.co.uk)

*STEVE MASON* is Lead Campaigner at Frack Free United. He tweets at @steveason2111





# THE ROLE OF FOOD INTAKING ON *THE CLIMATE EMERGENCY*

MARK BANAHAN

**There are deep cracks in our food system. It generates an unequitable distribution of resources, with many in rural communities struggling to derive sufficient income from their work. It does not enable healthy diets, leaving us with many diet-related public health crises. Global livestock populations are at historic highs and still rising. The food system's potential in contributing to ending the climate emergency remains untapped.**

There are many potential improvements to our food system but one of the key ways that cannot be ignored is an increase in plant-based food production and consumption.

Plant-based food, i.e. food that does not contain any animal products, is far better for the environment on any sustainability metric. If we take greenhouse gas emissions - one of the most important metrics we use to measure our environmental impact - a fully plant-based diet can have up to 50% less emissions compared to an average meat-eating diet. This is a massive reduction, which over time makes a huge cumulative difference to your carbon footprint, especially when you are lucky enough to be able to eat three times a day, every day.

## Single biggest way

One of the reasons for plant-based food faring so much better on this metric, is the inherent inefficiency in producing animal products. On average, only 12% of the calories in crops grown and fed to animals are retained in the animal products when eaten. This is because living animals need calories for warmth, respiration, movement and everything else biologically required

for survival. If all the current crops fed to farm animals were repurposed for human consumption, we could feed an additional three billion humans globally.

If we look at other environmental metrics, like the amount of agricultural land and water required to produce food, plant-based produce is also far more sustainable. Oxford University researchers concluded that switching to a plant-based diet is the single biggest way that an individual can reduce their environmental impact on the planet, even bigger than switching to an electric vehicle or reducing the amounts of flights taken each year. This is in part because there are so many other environmental factors that food production affects, such as soil erosion and water pollution.

*If we look at other environmental metrics, like the amount of agricultural land and water required to produce food, plant-based produce is also far more sustainable*

Dr Helen Harwatt, an academic at Harvard University, has modelled a couple of scenarios for UK land use in order to help us meet our Paris Agreement

commitments to limit global heating. The first scenario models widespread reforestation of current pasture land with the new trees helping to sequester large amounts of carbon from the atmosphere. This is essential, as CO<sub>2</sub> has an atmospheric lifespan of approximately 100 years. Methane, by contrast, has a far shorter lifespan of approximately 25 years.

Reductions in methane-producing cattle and other ruminant livestock will result in a reduction of methane released into our atmosphere. As existing methane in the atmosphere breaks down in a shorter amount of time than CO<sub>2</sub>, this gives us potential for a global cooling impact in the timescales we need to be reducing greenhouse gases. The research finds that if all UK pastureland were reforested this would enable the UK to meet its emissions obligations.

## Part of the solution

The second piece of modelling looks at our ability to meet all of our nutritional requirements here in the UK, if we repurposed cropland currently growing animal feed to growing crops for human consumption instead. The research shows that this is possible. We could grow a diverse array of different crops, ensuring that we have enough varied foods to meet all our nutritional targets. We could be food secure, in the sense that we wouldn't need to be so reliant on imported food post-Brexit.

If we are to take meaningful action to tackle the multiple environmental crises facing us, plant-based food

## *On an individual level, the single biggest thing you can do is to go vegan and eat a fully plant-based diet*

must be part of the solution. But what can we do to ensure this happens?

On an individual level, the single biggest thing you can do is to go vegan and eat a fully plant-based diet. Our Plate Up for the Planet campaign can help you take the first step by supporting you through the first week. We provide lots of new recipes and tips to make it as easy as possible, whilst reminding you of the positive impact on the environment you are having. If you are already vegan or eating a plant-based diet, you can encourage your friends, family and colleagues to do the same, by sharing our resources and having positive conversations with them. You can sign up or access the resources here: [www.vegansociety.com/plateup](http://www.vegansociety.com/plateup).

### **Tools to protect**

At institutional level, there are simple policies for the Labour Party to adopt and Labour Party members to support that would help to shift diets and agricultural practices.

Firstly, we need the Government to support farm transitions away from animal farming. We can hand farmers the tools to protect the planet themselves by properly aligning the financial support system with public goods, to tackle the steep economic barriers in the way of sustainable land use. One policy to help achieve this involves offering a package of support for farmers who are interested in transitioning away from livestock farming towards pulse production or reforestation. The specific support on offer can be decided upon by consulting with farmers, but the initial start-up capital costs should be included at a minimum.

Rising livestock numbers are contributing to the climate emergency, resource inefficiency, anti-microbial resistance, and animal

protection issues. In contrast, pulses are among the most environmentally friendly crops, fixing nitrogen, improving soil health, and providing healthy, accessible food.

### **Real opportunity**

The package of support should also be available for farmers interested in reforesting their land. Our uplands provide a real opportunity here; a national reforestation programme could lock up nine years' worth of UK greenhouse gas emissions, Dr Harwatt's Harvard study found.

Secondly, a simple, complementary policy, which connects changes in production to consumption, is to legislate for a guaranteed plant-based meal on every public sector canteen menu. This would mean that plant-based meals are available to all without making a special request. This ensures that everyone, including the most vulnerable (e.g. schoolchildren, hospital patients and prisoners), has access to nutritious, sustainable food.

This policy already has public backing from around a dozen Labour parliamentarians and the Committee on Climate Change recently stated that 'the public sector should take a strong lead by offering more plant-based food'.

Plant-based food is typically high in fruit and vegetables, meaning less saturated fat and plenty of fibre. Building familiarity with plant-based food could help to address the many diet-related public health crises putting strain on the NHS. Plant-based food is inclusive and can be enjoyed by almost everyone. It is also straightforward to make these dishes suitable for people with religious dietary requirements.

In the UK, poor diet has an estimated cost of £6 billion a year on NHS budgets due to preventable ill-health. This can be addressed through the promotion of healthier, plant-based foods. However, healthy food remains inaccessible for many, particularly those on low incomes.

The right to food should instead be a right to sustainable, nutritious food. This puts food sovereignty at the heart of the creation of a sustainable food policy. Just improving access to healthy foods is not enough; we must also tackle factors such as poverty and inequality, which contribute to negative health outcomes. Studies have shown that even just a 10% fruit and vegetable subsidy would enable citizens to make healthier choices, helping to uphold the state's duty to provide food that supports the wellbeing of its citizens.

Together, these policies would begin to heal the cracks in our food system. They would move us towards being a carbon neutral country, whilst protecting vulnerable groups, animals, and all our citizens.



**FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT**  
the Plate Up for the Planet campaign, go to [www.vegansociety.com/plateup](http://www.vegansociety.com/plateup)

**MARK BANAHAN** is a Campaigns and Policy Officer at The Vegan Society. He tweets at @MarkBanahan



# DESIGNING DEVELOPMENT TO DELIVER ON NATURE, CLIMATE AND HOUSING

REBECCA PULLINGER

**We are in a world full of crises. There have been a host of reports showing us the dire straits we are now in and the imperative that we act now. These include:**

- The Intergovernmental science-policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) found that up to one million species are at risk of extinction;
- The recent report from the Committee on Climate Change showed how the Government has delivered just one of 25 critical policies needed to meet net zero by 2050; and,
- CPRE analysis of government figures found that it would take 130 years to house those on the waiting list, given the current rate at which new social housing is being built in rural areas.

We must look for solutions that enable us to address all of these and avoid unintended impacts on each – we must not build affordable houses that destroy habitat, or provide environmental net gain that pushes up prices beyond the reach of ordinary families. We must look at ways we can reduce, mitigate and adapt to bring about the changes needed.

Development can be sustainable and we can deliver homes that meet the needs of today's generation and future generations to come. At a recent UK Housing Delivery Conference, I was pleased to see acknowledgement from across the sector, from planners, councils and developers, that we need to do more to match housebuilding aspirations with the climate emergency.

Here are a few ways how:

## 1. Selecting sites

**The location of development should be evaluated through planning processes. This should seek to site new developments so that harm to existing nature is reduced.**

Sites should also be selected to avoid land that has the highest potential for mitigating and adapting to climate change.

Careful selection of development sites should minimise the need for new infrastructure, and maximise use of existing infrastructure. This is particularly important with regard to the type and amount of energy used and emissions generated by transport. This can be achieved both by the strategic location of such developments, and their internal arrangements.

Recycling land is as important as recycling our waste. Reusing suitable brownfield land, or land which has already been developed, avoids harm to existing nature and reduces the need for new infrastructure. Many brownfield sites are located near jobs and amenities, reducing the need to travel. They also enable the use of existing infrastructure meaning less energy is required for homes' construction and maintenance. This reduces the costs associated with infrastructure and is perhaps the reason why brownfield sites are delivered much quicker than greenfield sites once they have been granted planning permission.

Cleaning up brownfield land removes contamination and local eyesores, attracting investment into urban areas and regenerating our towns and cities. Doing more to build on brownfield land is the most popular solution to the housing crisis.

On the other hand, greenfield land is most likely to have green habitat, such as trees, grasses, and hedgerows. The removal of these would mean the removal of key carbon sinks from an area. The role of soil should also not be overlooked; concreting over soil means that it cannot do its vital job in sequestering carbon.

Whilst some brownfield land does have high environmental value (6 to 8% of the total) much of it is suitable for redevelopment. In fact, we now know, thanks to the brownfield registers published by all 338 Local Planning Authorities in England as a result of CPRE's campaigning, that there are over 18,000 suitable brownfield sites with space for over one million homes. The majority of these homes are on shovel-ready sites, and the registers also prove that brownfield land is a renewable resource with new sites coming forward all the time.

## 2. Designing places

**Planning policies should seek to ensure sustainable design of new development, supporting new communities to live happy, healthy and environmentally-friendly lives.**

As noted earlier, the delivery of more compact forms of development with a mix of uses, as found in many European towns and cities, can help to reduce the need for new infrastructure, or promote the increased use of existing facilities.

In terms of energy consumption, this can be achieved through the layout, form and massing of buildings, for example aligning buildings to make best use of passive solar heating and reducing heat-loss through wind-chill. New development

## *Development can be sustainable and we can deliver homes that meet the needs of today's generation and future generations to come*

can be energy-positive by including renewable energy generation, such as solar panels on the roofs of buildings and other forms of microgeneration. These can also help bring down costs for those living in new developments.

Increasing the density of development can also help create more sustainable places. For example, research suggests that housing density upwards of 60 homes per hectare is required to support public transport services, and yet current average development densities are half this. Designing new development to reduce car-dependency, achieved through higher density and designing a mix of uses, means that those who do not own a car are more able to thrive in new communities including both young and elderly people as well as socially deprived families.

Transport for New Homes have shown how higher density development, in reducing the need for cars, leaves more space for nature within and outside of developments. Urban greenery, such as street trees and wild verges can help create places and communities where people want to live, help address air pollution and support the health and well-being of current and future residents.

If you double the density, you can halve the amount of land needed to deliver the same number of homes. This can leave more open countryside, with accessible green spaces near where people live, while providing more space for nature.

### 3. Building homes

The design of homes themselves can also

reduce energy use. UK building standards on energy and emissions lag far behind what is required to address climate change, especially since the government withdrew from commitments on zero-carbon homes. Buildings, especially homes, designed to higher standards can help to meet other objectives, including reducing both energy demand and fuel poverty. **Building regulations should set and enforce appropriate minimum standards for the energy and emissions performance of individual buildings.**

Building regulations and planning can work together to provide minimum standards for the performance of materials used in buildings. Again practice in the UK lags behind many other countries. The performance of materials can be considered in a number of different ways, including:

- thermal characteristics, from simple insulation to passive solar heating
- longevity, reducing the need to replace buildings over time
- recyclability, whether the material is itself recycled, as can be the case in brownfield redevelopment, or after the lifetime of the building
- potential for long-term carbon storage, for example wood and straw bale construction
- local provenance and distinctiveness, reducing transportation of materials, and supporting local character

Water conservation and management is an essential component of climate change

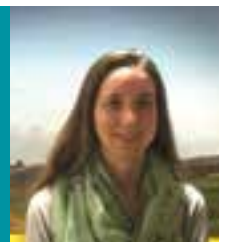
mitigation, since demand for water will inevitably increase at the same time as climate potentially resulting in fresh water becoming scarcer. Simple measures in building design and technology can help to reduce water use and water loss, and maximise the recycling of water, including its safe and clean return into the environment.

### 4. Sustainable development

Through careful design, we must address the contribution of development to the climate emergency and ecological crisis while building the homes that we need. This includes through siting development in the right places, designing communities to reduce consumption and infrastructure needs and building homes that are sustainable.

The introduction of an environmental net gain as part of the development process could help to bring these different levels of good design together. Done well it can help us go from a no net loss mindset to delivering more positive outcomes through an integrated approach to planning and development. Only by building homes that help us to address the climate crisis can we create thriving communities to the benefit of us all.

REBECCA PULLINGER  
Land Use Campaigns  
and Policy  
Officer, CPRE.  
She tweets at  
[@beckyjpullinger](https://twitter.com/beckyjpullinger)



# HOW OUR NEW MODEL OF MUNICIPAL SOCIALISM WILL HELP LEAD THE ZERO- CARBON REVOLUTION

LIAM BYRNE MP

**Exhausted governments make for exasperating politics. So, thank heavens for the young climate strikers prepared to take to the streets to protest against a politics that is frozen while the planet inexorably warms. In the wake of the protests something profoundly important has begun: local politicians are starting to take the steps we need to replace the Tories' muddle with a credible zero-carbon model - that's what I hope to do as Labour's Metro-mayor next year.**

The West Midlands has a special role – and a special responsibility – to help lead our national effort. It was after all, in the Black Country – christened for its atmosphere, 'black by day and red by night' - where the first practical steam engine was demonstrated, back in 1712. In the years that followed, from Matthew Boulton to Sir Frank Whittle, we led the world into first the steam age and then the jet age. Today, we are the epicentre of the UK's electric vehicle industry. So: the region that pioneered the carbon revolution is now determined to lead the zero-carbon revolution.

But, that will take all hands on deck. Which is why within 48 hours of declaring a climate emergency we convened the region's first citizens' assembly to debate the principles we need to guide us.

It was, quite literally, one of the most inspiring meetings I've ever helped to host. Here were people of all ages and all backgrounds coming together to discuss how we had to change. The principals that emerged were clear.

Commitment to the 1.5°C goal was unwavering, but voices were united that we need to be fair in achieving it. We need a culture shift to ensure destroying the planet is no longer incentivised and the movement to a green economy needs to work with trade unions to ensure job creation in new industries as work in carbon-heavy industries dries up.

We agreed that the burden of this shift needs to be placed on the polluters and those who have benefitted most from the carbon revolution. Making the necessary changes will require significant political will, and the ability to move beyond party politics. We must not underestimate how big these changes will be, so it is critical that are movement is inclusive and representative of the communities affected.

Our task now as 'green' Labour is to translate those ideas into action. There's nowhere better than the West Midlands to help lead the charge. Because we cannot leave change to the market, we will need to build new institutions to help us. Here again we look to our history to help us build the future.

Back in the 1860s Birmingham was home to the emergence of one of the most powerful new ideas in politics: the civic gospel. Preached by the radical George Dawson, it inspired the municipal socialism of Joseph Chamberlain who created in Birmingham what was lauded as the 'best governed city in the world'.

This is our task once again - for we cannot lead the Green Industrial Revolution without a 21st century municipal socialism; a new West Midlands Model. It means for instance that we need a Regional Investment Bank to provide strategic stakes in green industry and a Green Development Corporation to help us build green homes. We need a municipal green energy company to help us roll out renewables. We need an Office of Nature to help us replant the ancient forest of Arden and re-wild our green spaces, an Office of Community Wealth Building to help us maximise the contribution of public procurement and a National Education service to help equip us with the skills we need. Without these changes it will be simply impossible to make the leap at the speed we need to make it.

Writing on Dawson, the historian Ewan Fernie reflected: "Though Dawson was something of a firebrand, what he ultimately wanted and espoused was the kind of revolution which the leader of the German student movement, Rudi Dutschke, called 'the long march through institutions'". That is precisely the approach we need today. So let's start now.

*LIAM BYRNE MP*  
is Shadow Digital  
Minister and Labour  
MP for Hodge Hill. He  
is standing for West  
Midlands Metro Mayor.  
He tweets at  
[@LiamByrneMP](https://twitter.com/LiamByrneMP)



# SCOTTISH ACTION ON THE ENVIRONMENT & CLIMATE EMERGENCY

CLAUDIA BEAMISH MSP

**The declaration of the climate and environment emergency shows us the reality of what we face, a significant but necessary challenge, but one that could hold inordinate positivity for our collective future.**

It is becoming ever clearer that this emergency requires a role of all of us – government, parliament, the public and private sectors, trade unions, communities, and citizens.

Our response must be driven by a red-green perspective, locking in social justice to a green revolution for our economy and society.

A change has come. Momentum on climate change action has grown exponentially, becoming the defining spirit of this period of humanity's story. In fact, Sir David Attenborough recently stated people now view chucking plastic into the ocean as an insult, after his 20 years of campaigning.

The door for ideas on sustainability, climate change action and whole system change for the sake of our planet has swung wide open.

Scottish Labour is playing a vital role in the Scottish Parliament, ensuring climate justice, inter-generational justice and the just transition are at the heart of everything the Bill sets out to achieve and at the core of our long term action on climate change.

This is in part thanks to engaging with inspiring activists and their tirelessly

campaigning. Many of my colleagues have joined the school strikes and seen the power of young people demanding we protect the future. And I was delighted to share a platform with Extinction Rebellion, and to visit their peaceful protest outside the Parliament along with Scottish Labour Leader Richard Leonard.

We support their call for a Citizen's Assembly on climate change, which could be especially useful when the Scottish Government revisits the Climate Change Plan to better align policy with our renewed ambition on long term targets. However, in our parliamentary democracy, I am clear elected politicians must be inspired and focussed by this, not bound its recommendations.

*I am proud to say that Scottish Labour has been ahead of the curve, as over a year ago we committed to a setting a target of net zero emissions, where the SNP Government were too timid*

I am proud to say that Scottish Labour has been ahead of the curve, as over a year ago we committed to a setting a

target of net zero emissions, where the SNP Government were too timid. Originally, we set a target for net zero emissions by 2050 at the latest, but we are unafraid to listen to experts, and the developing science and research published since has shifted us on to 2045, which I am delighted to say will be set in the Climate Change Bill.

My amendments on climate justice have had a positive reception, and I am encouraged that the SNP Government may concede on these areas. We know that those who did the least to cause global temperature rise are the people that will feel its effects first and worst, and we must do all we can to limit that damage and support the global south in their own transformation. I want to see the principles of climate justice set into our legislation, protecting human rights, international development goals, democratic decision making, gender equality, the just transition, future generations, and acting proportionately to Scotland's historic contribution to global emissions. This is a long and fundamentally important list for Labour movement action.

I also want better recognition of international development, including explicit reference to Sustainable Development Goals, a commitment to sharing technology and knowledge with the global south, and calculating Scotland's fair and safe carbon budget with all these factors accounted for.

We also absolutely need climate justice in Scotland. From the beginning of considering my party's response to the Climate Change Bill, I knew a Just Transition

Commission would be a vital accompaniment to any ambitious long term target.

I have been working together with the Just Transition Partnership, formed by Friends of the Earth Scotland and the STUC in 2016, whose membership now also includes Unite Scotland, UNISON Scotland, UCU Scotland, CWU Scotland, PCS Scotland and WWF Scotland.

It is quite hard for me to understand the SNP reluctance to support my amendments to on this.

Environmental and social policies should be mutually reinforcing, and Labour has a major role to play in ensuring the right balance between its internationalist and moral responsibility, and the appropriate route for Scottish workers and communities. Ultimately, we need this shift to be guided by those in the industry, those in the unions, and those with the expertise.

The SNP Just Transition Commission, established after significant pressure from my party, is a step in the right direction, but it simply does not go far enough. It is not statutory, it is not independent from Government, but most droll of all – it has a lifespan of three years. This shows a complete misunderstanding of the concerns of our affected communities and workers. We need the just transition to be at the forefront of decision making for as long as our economy is shifting.

When most think of the just transition, it is the North Sea issue that comes to mind. This is fundamental, and those workers and communities deserve a proper industrial strategy. But, the just transition must be for all sectors – supporting our agriculture industry, reinvigorating Scottish manufacturing and remanufacturing, and bringing everyone along with us.

I will not ease up pressure on the Scottish Government to reconsider this ahead of the final stage of the Bill this Autumn.

Scottish Labour is also robustly committed to banning onshore fracking in Scotland. I have a private members bill proposal which will be used if appropriate to enshrined this in legislation. The best way forward may well be in policy and the Scottish government has agreed to my amendment in a debate

on this issue to put it into the forthcoming Scottish policy planning framework that there will not be onshore fracking in Scotland. This is right for our climate and our environment and to protect our communities. It is imperative that there is not a new, dirty, transition fuel, when we are developing the green jobs revolution which will bring real sustainable jobs in energy and energy efficiency across Scotland.

There is also, of course, an environment emergency. Changes in our environment are so often interlinked and need a holistic approach, and our biodiversity and ecosystems are also in a state of crisis. In Scotland, one in 11 species are threatened with extinction. The Scottish Government's record is shameful – meeting only seven out of 20 of our biodiversity targets with just over a year to go until the 2020 target deadline.

It is disappointing given the scale of this issue that the First Minister couldn't offer any commitment to plan for accelerated action on biodiversity beyond 2020. An example I have been contacted about by a number of constituents is concern over the record low number of salmon in our rivers. It is shocking to think that we are jeopardising one of Scotland most iconic species.

Biodiversity deserves the same collective action and energy as we have recently seen on climate change.

There are many challenges, and I am certainly kept busy as Scottish Labour's Spokesperson on Climate Change, Environment, and Land Reform. We have had successes; from protecting kelp from commercial extraction, preserving this source of blue carbon and enhancing our wider marine environment; to keeping the forestry as an arms-length body, preserving the valuable knowledge and expertise of existing staff and protecting it from misgivings about the centralisation and even possible future privatisation of forestry under the SNP Government.

Looking to the future, so many of these issues need the Labour movement perspective. We need a more just approach to Scottish land ownership. For Labour, land reform is about community and empowerment to take more control over their economic, social and environmental

destiny. It is about the public interest. It is also about the balance of power shifting from the few to the many, and the opportunity and wealth that can flow from ownership of one of our most fundamental assets, our land, being shared more equally among our people.

Better land justice will bring a raft of opportunities for more sustainable land management. This could vastly improve the protection of our peatlands, which remain at risk with a lack of data held on them and a confused system not fit for purpose, despite my efforts in the recent Planning Bill.

Different patterns of land ownership could also help the shift away from the overly vast driven grouse moors and the irresponsible action by some land managers, which leads to serious environmental harm in some of Scotland's most beautiful wild spaces. Community ownership has been proven to bring sustainable development in the public interest and Scottish Labour is supportive of radical action enabling local communities and biodiversity to thrive together instead of a fifth of Scotland being managed as a playground for the rich to pay big money to come and shot for fun! Driven grouse moors must be bound by robust criteria and I await the findings of the Scottish Government commissioned Wherry Report with interest.

It is thrilling and a challenge to us all that the climate and environment emergency has come to receive due recognition here in Scotland.

In Labour's vision, this means opportunity to offer a credible strategy and positive, radical change, and it is to our advantage to work with Labour colleagues on this vision across the whole of the UK.

As Richard Leonard said in a recent speech in Motherwell, "when we are calling for a Green Industrial Revolution, we are calling for a decisive social revolution too."

**CLAUDIA BEAMISH MSP**  
is the Scottish Labour  
Spokesperson on  
Climate Change.  
She tweets at  
[@Claudiabeamish](https://twitter.com/Claudiabeamish)



# Climate Emergency: RAPID RESPONSE

SERA's FRINGE PROGRAMME  
AT LABOUR CONFERENCE



The Dome Room, Hotel du Vin,  
2 Ship St, BN1 1AD  
Just a 4 min walk from the Conference Centre

## Taking On Brexit And The Climate Emergency

11:00 – 12:00. Sunday 22nd

*SERA and Remain  
and Reform*

**CHAIR:** Melanie Smallman, Co-Chair, SERA  
**Hilary Benn MP**, Chair, Exiting the EU Select Committee  
**Seb Dance MEP**, Deputy Leader of European Parliamentary Labour Party  
**Mike Buckley**, Director, Remain and Reform  
**Anna McMorris MP**, Environment Audit Committee

## Ending Fracking And The Climate Emergency

17:00 – 18:15. Sunday 22nd

*SERA with Frack  
Free United*

**CHAIR:** Tom Anderton, SERA  
**Barry Gardiner MP**, Shadow Secretary for International  
Trade and Minister for International Climate Change  
**Andy Gheorghiu**, Food & Water Watch Europe  
**Katie de Kauwe**, Lawyer, Friends of The Earth

## Uplands, National Parks and Climate Change: Supporting Nature for the Many

12:45 – 14:00. Monday 23rd

*SERA and RSPB*

**CHAIR:** Daniel Zeichner MP, SERA  
**Sue Hayman MP**, Shadow Secretary for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
**Hilary Benn MP**, Chair, Exiting the EU Select Committee  
**Helen Goodman MP**, Shadow Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs Minister  
**Beccy Speight**, Chief Executive, RSPB  
Uplands Farmer (invited)

## Labour Cities Cleaning Up Our Air

16:30 – 17:30. Monday 23rd

*SERA and UK100*

**CHAIR:** Melanie Smallman, Co-Chair, SERA  
**Polly Billington**, Director, UK100  
**Local Government Leaders Q&A** including  
**Andy Burnham**, Mayor of Greater Manchester (Invited)  
**Marvin Rees**, Mayor of Bristol (Invited)

## Climate SOS: Net Zero Reception

19:45 – 21:15. Monday 23rd

*SERA and  
Sustainability Hub*

**CHAIR:** Alex Sobel MP, SERA's Parliamentary Network  
**Danielle Rowley MP**, Shadow Minister for Climate Justice & Green Jobs  
**Karen Potter**, Sustainability Hub

## Plastic Crisis: Time To Tidy Up Our Act

17:45 – 19:00. Tuesday 24th

*SERA and Viridor*

**CHAIR:** Leonie Cooper AM, SERA  
**Sandy Martin MP**, Shadow Waste & Recycling Minister  
**Anna McMorris MP**, Environment Audit Committee  
**Paul Ringham**, Commercial Director, Viridor  
**Julian Kirby**, Plastics Campaign, Friends of The Earth

## Labour's Menu For Change: The Role of Food In Tackling The Climate Emergency

12:45 – 14:00. Sunday 22nd

*SERA with The Vegan  
Society and Sustain*

**CHAIR:** Darren Jones MP  
**Sue Hayman MP**, Shadow Secretary for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
**Louise Davies**, The Vegan Society  
**Ben Reynolds**, Deputy Chief Executive, Sustain  
**Dr Helen Harwatt**, Animal Law & Policy Fellow, Hansard Law School

## The Green Industrial Revolution Reception

19:00 – 20:30. Sunday 22nd

*SERA with Prospect  
and the Offshore  
Wind Industry Council*

**CHAIR:** Jake Sumner, Co-Chair, SERA  
**Rebecca Long-Bailey MP**, Shadow Secretary for  
Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy  
**Mike Clancy**, General Secretary, Prospect  
**Benj Sykes**, Co-Chair, OWIC

## Green Revolution: How Will The Treasury Tackle The Environment And Climate Emergency?

15:00 – 16:15. Monday 23rd

*SERA and  
Greener UK*

**CHAIR:** Jake Sumner, Co-Chair, SERA  
**Clive Lewis MP**, Shadow Treasury Minister  
**Lisa Nandy MP**, Former Shadow Energy & Climate Change Minister  
**Fanny Calder**, Director of Campaigns & Public Affairs, WWF-UK  
**Martha McPherson**, Head of Green Economy & Sustainable Growth at IIPP, UCL

## The SERA Rally – Climate Emergency: Rapid Response

18:00 – 19:15. Monday 23rd

*SERA with Calor*

**CHAIR:** Melanie Smallman  
& Jake Sumner, SERA  
**Diane Abbott MP**  
**Jon Ashworth MP**  
**Liam Byrne MP**  
**Rokhsana Fiaz**, Mayor of Newham  
**Nia Griffith MP**  
**Sue Hayman MP**  
**Clive Lewis MP**

**Andy McDonald MP** (invited)  
**John McDonnell MP** (invited)  
**Frances O'Grady**  
**Laura Parker**, Momentum  
**Luke Pollard MP**  
**Lloyd Russell-Moyle MP**  
**Emily Thornberry**  
**And other speakers  
to be confirmed**

## A Home Shouldn't Cost The Earth: How Labour Can Address The Housing And Climate Crises

12:45 – 14:00. Tuesday 24th

*SERA and Labour  
Housing Group,  
CPRE and FMB*

**CHAIR:** Jake Sumner, Co-Chair, SERA  
**Alex Cunningham MP**, Shadow Minister for Housing  
**Helen Hayes MP**, Housing, Communities and Local Government Committee  
**Nicky Gavron AM**, Deputy Chair of the London Planning Committee  
**Lois Lane**, Housing Campaigns Officer, CPRE  
**Brian Berry**, Chief Executive, Federation of Master Builders

## Developing Our Horizons – Fighting for Social And Environment Justice Abroad

12:30 – 14:00. Tuesday 24th

*Christians on the  
Left and SERA*

St Pauls Church, 60 West St, Brighton, BN1 2RS  
**CHAIR:** Hannah Rich, Christians On The Left  
**Jonathan Reynolds MP**, Shadow Economic Secretary  
to the Treasury and Shadow City Minister  
**Bill Esterson MP**, Shadow Business & International Trade Minister  
**Paul Cook**, Advocacy & Media Director, Tearfund  
**Rachael Maskell MP**, Shadow Transport Minister (invited)

➤ For our full listings and speakers visit  
[SERA.org.uk/Labourconference19](https://SERA.org.uk/Labourconference19)