

The Climate Emergency

A Fair Contribution

November 2021



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Climate Emergency

The Ulster Unionist Party has **declared a Climate Emergency** and has joined with other parties to put forward a Climate Change Bill. Northern Ireland is the only part of the UK not to have Climate Change legislation and the Bill will mandate the Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive to prepare Climate Action Plans and join with the rest of the UK in Climate Change mitigation.

Fair Contribution

Northern Ireland is a significant net exporter of agri-food products with nearly 50% of all agri-food products produced in Northern Ireland consumed in the rest of the UK. As the smallest region within the UK Northern Ireland supplies a disproportionate amount of food, feeding approximately 10 million citizens in the UK annually. The independent Climate Change Committee has stated that **for the UK to reach Net Zero target a fair contribution from NI would be an 82% or better reduction in greenhouse gases by 2050 compared to 1990 levels.**

The Ulster Unionist Party welcomes this intervention from the independent committee and has accepted its recommendation and will target an 82% or better reduction in greenhouse gases for Northern Ireland as part of the ongoing Climate Action Plan.

A New Green Industrial Revolution

The UK government has launched a Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution which brings together ambitious policies and significant new public investment, while seeking to mobilise private investment. Two centuries ago, the United Kingdom, with Belfast and this region at its heart, led the world's first Industrial Revolution and by investing in clean technologies – wind, carbon capture, hydrogen and many others – the UK intends to lead the world into a **New Green Industrial Revolution**.

The scale, expense and technologically changes and investments needed to enable Northern Ireland to contribute to the race to Net Zero and to build a New Green Industrial Revolution is such that they can only be achieved through our cherished position as part of the United Kingdom.

The Ulster Unionist Party, **as the leading party of Unionism**, is committed to Northern Ireland contributing its fair share to the UK's Net Zero commitments and to delivering a New Green Industrial Revolution through working closely with Her Majesty's Government in Westminster, the private sector, the City of London and the other devolved administrations to ensure that the nationally announced plans and investments are delivered and funded fully in Northern Ireland.

Leading Party of Unionism

As the leading party of Unionism, the UUP will put the Climate Emergency and the New Green Industrial Revolution at the heart of government and ensure the Executive Office and the First and Deputy First Ministers' take responsibility for driving through the crucial decisions to ensure Northern Ireland makes a fair contribution to mitigating climate change and deliver jobs and prosperity through new technologies and industries.

Northern Ireland has fallen behind the rest of the UK in combating climate change and preparing for the New Green Industrial Revolution. The current DUP/ Sinn Fein led Executive has failed on this and other crucial issues and the Ulster Unionist Party intends to be the new broom sweeping away the failures of the past and delivering on the promise of the future.



A Climate Emergency in Northern Ireland

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The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) first came into force in 1994 with the aim to prevent “dangerous” human interference with the climate system and now has 197 countries that are Parties to the Convention. Subsequently the Paris Agreement in 2015 set long term goals to substantially reduce global greenhouse gas emissions to limit the global temperature, to keep the increase in global average temperature to below 2°C above pre-industrial levels while pursuing efforts to limit the temperature increase to 1.5°C above the baseline. It pledges to review signatories’ commitments every five years and provide financing to developing countries to mitigate climate change, strengthen resilience and enhance abilities to adapt to climate impacts.

Climate policy is devolved in the UK and Scotland and Wales have passed Climate legislation. The Climate Change (Emissions Reduction Targets) (Scotland) Act 2019 amends previous legislation raising the ambition of Scotland’s domestic targets to net zero Greenhouse Gases (GHG) emissions by 2045, and interim targets of 56%, 75% and 90% reductions in emissions by 2020, 2030 and 2040 respectively, relative to a 1990/1995 baseline. The Environment (Wales) Act (2016)¹¹ requires Welsh Ministers to reduce all emissions in Wales by at least 80% by 2050, against a 1990/1995 baseline. Welsh Government intends to legislate more ambitious targets to 2050, including for 2030.

Northern Ireland is the only legislature in the UK not to have a Climate Change Act

and the UUP has committed to rectifying this, joining with other parties to co-sponsor a Private Member’s Climate Change Bill. The Climate Change Bill (Northern Ireland) 2021 will enable the mitigation of the impact of climate change in Northern Ireland; establish a legally binding carbon target for Northern Ireland; provide for the establishment and powers of the Northern Ireland Climate Commissioner and Northern Ireland Climate Office and guarantee existing environmental and climate protections.

The Bill mandates that the Executive Office (TEO) lays before the NI Assembly a Climate Action Plan within three years of Bill becoming law and that subsequent Plans be placed before the Assembly every five years after the first Plan.

Climate Action Plans will comprise of Targets and Measures with Targets required for:

- net greenhouse gas emissions
- water quality
- soil quality
- biodiversity

and Measures required for:

- carbon budgets,
- nitrogen budgets,
- sectoral plans

and other programmes within the meaning of the UK Climate Change Act 2008.

Sectoral plans will be required for energy production and supply, transport, infrastructure, business and industrial processes, residential, waste management, land use and land-use change and agriculture.

Each of these plans will be required to support jobs that are climate resilient and environmentally and socially sustainable, support net-zero carbon investment and infrastructure, create work which is high-value, fair and sustainable and reduce inequality as far as possible and reduce, with a view to eliminating, poverty and social deprivation.

The Carbon budget will specify the annual amounts of greenhouse gases to be removed from the atmosphere by way of land use or land-use change in Northern Ireland and will establish a scheme for tracking carbon usage, including purchase of carbon units while capping the purchase to 25% of the reduction target in greenhouse gas emissions for that year.

The Nitrogen budget must set out a target nitrogen use efficiency in the environment for Northern Ireland while taking into consideration the transboundary element of nitrogen flows in Northern Ireland and provide annual targets to reach the target nitrogen use efficiency in agriculture and food production; transport and energy.

Annual reports laid before the Assembly must specify the target for the relevant year; whether or not the target has been met and if the target has not been met, the reasons for failure to meet that target. These reports will present the progress on the implementation of each policy or proposal contained in each sectoral plan; indicate the likelihood that each policy or proposal contained in each plan will be implemented in full and the likelihood that the sectoral plans, when taken together, will ensure that the overriding climate objective is achieved. An annual report may also contain recommendations to ameliorate any failures detailed in the report.

A Northern Ireland Climate Office will be constituted providing for a Northern Ireland Climate

Commissioner and support staff to be appointed. The Climate Commissioner will be responsible for monitoring the Climate Action Plans, reviewing the implementation of the Bill and making recommendations to the Executive. The Commissioner will not have enforcement powers but the TEO will be mandated to address any issues raised.

Northern Ireland is a significant net exporter of agri-food products with nearly 50% of all agri-food products produced in Northern Ireland consumed in the rest of the UK. As the smallest region within the UK Northern Ireland supplies a disproportionate amount of food, feeding approximately 10 million citizens in the UK annually.

The independent Climate Change Committee has said that **for the UK to reach Net Zero target a fair contribution from NI would be an 82% or better reduction in greenhouse gases by 2050 compared to 1990 levels.**

The Ulster Unionist party welcomes this intervention from the independent committee and has accepted its recommendation and will target an 82% or better reduction in greenhouse gases for Northern Ireland as part of the ongoing Climate Action Plan.

Just as science has clearly evidenced the magnitude of the climate change crisis, so science and evidence must also underpin the strategy to deliver targets whilst avoiding any unintended consequences or damaging outworking's of well-intentioned legislation. The NI Dept. of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) has recently brought forward its own Climate Change Bill. The Ulster Unionist Party will work to combine both Bills into a single piece of legislation that could complete all stages and receive the Royal Assent before the end of this Assembly's mandate.



A NEW GREEN INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

‘The Ulster Unionist Party commits to Northern Ireland making a fair contribution to the UK’s Net Zero target’

Northern Ireland enjoys the great privilege of being a constituent member of the United Kingdom and an integral part of one of the world’s largest economies. The UK has pledged to play a leading role in tackling climate change and mitigating its negative impacts. The Ulster Unionist Party commits to Northern Ireland making a fair contribution to the UK’s Net Zero targets while leveraging the UK’s economic might to re-balance the NI economy and build back better after the coronavirus pandemic.

The UK government has launched a Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution which brings together ambitious policies and significant new public investment, while seeking to mobilise private investment. Two centuries

ago, the UK, with Belfast and this region at its heart, led the world’s first Industrial Revolution and by investing in clean technologies – wind, carbon capture, hydrogen and many others – Britain intends to lead the world into a New Green Industrial Revolution.

The Ten Point Plan mobilises £12 billion – and potentially more than three times as much from the private sector – to place green jobs at the heart of the UK’s economic revival. The UUP intends to ensure Northern Ireland shares in this prosperity and the **250,000** jobs predicted to be supported by **2030**.





Among the areas to be tackled are:

Low Carbon Hydrogen

The UK is aiming for 5GW of low carbon hydrogen production capacity by 2030. Hydrogen heating trials are being established, starting with a Hydrogen Neighbourhood and scaling up to a potential Hydrogen Town before the end of the decade. Further measures are planned, including a £240 million Net Zero Hydrogen Fund. Hydrogen business models are to be published soon alongside a revenue mechanism to bring through private sector investment support. This is expected to support up to 8,000 jobs by 2030, with **potential to create up to 100,000 jobs by 2050**, against a target of £4 billion of private investment up to 2030.

The Ulster Unionist Party will place Hydrogen power at the centre of the next Executive's Programme for Government and ensure full participation in the UK's Hydrogen investment.

Accelerating the Shift to Zero Emission Vehicles

From 2030 the UK will end the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans, 10 years earlier than planned. Westminster has committed up to £1 billion to support the electrification of UK vehicles and their supply chains and is also underwriting 'Gigafactories' to produce the massive number of batteries needed. The UK also intends to invest £1.3 billion to speed up the introduction of charging infrastructure, targeting support to motorways and major roads. More on-street charge points will be installed near homes and workplaces to make charging as easy as refuelling a petrol or diesel car.

Costs of Electric Vehicles (EVs) are already falling, but the UK will provide £582 million to extend plug-in car and motorcycle grants to 2023, reducing the retail price for the consumer. A further £20 million will also be invested in trials of hydrogen and other zero emission lorries, to support the development of cost-effective, zero-emission HGVs in the UK.

The independent Climate Change Committee (CCC) has stated that the UK needs 150,000 electric charging posts if EVs are to replace petrol/diesel powered cars. Currently NI is lagging the rest of the UK with only 17 charging devices per 100,000 of population. This compares badly to 83 chargers per 100k of population in London and 47/100k in Scotland. Recent questions in the Assembly have revealed that as many as half of these chargers can be broken at any time. 'Range Anxiety' has been identified as one of the biggest barriers to EV adoption and NI's extremely limited and badly maintained charging network can only be exacerbating this.

The UUP recognises that any ambition to electrify the UK vehicle network **must be supported by a similar appetite from Planning Authorities to ensure that all future planning applications contain a mandatory provision for vehicle charging points at new domestic properties** where applicable.

The Ulster Unionist Party deplores the current lack of action towards the electrification of transport and will ensure it is a priority in a new Executive.



Green Public Transport, Cycling and Walking

The UK intends to invest tens of billions of pounds in development and revitalisation of the rail network with £4.2 billion in city public transport and £5 billion on buses, cycling and walking. More railway lines will be electrified and £120 million will be invested to introduce a minimum of 4,000 more British built zero emission buses to the transport network.

The UUP Environment Minister in 2015 outlined the kind of cycling community we would like to see over the next 25 years, with the publication of 'Northern Ireland Changing Gear – a Bicycle Strategy for Northern Ireland' which had the vision of '**a community where people have the freedom and confidence to travel by bicycle for everyday journeys**'.

A new Ulster Unionist-led Executive will continue with our cycling strategy and will support Translink's plans for the electrification of NI Railways and the further introduction of low emission and hydrogen-powered buses.





Greener Buildings

600,000 heat pump installations are planned per year in the UK by 2028. Regulations will be brought forward to support this especially in off gas grid properties – an important consideration in largely rural Northern Ireland. This leaves open the choice as to whether the UK ultimately pursues an electrified heating system, hydrogen heating or a combination, until all options are fully explored.

The UK government plans to extend Green Homes Grant for another year to improve the energy efficiency of homes and replace fossil fuel heating and will reduce emissions in schools, hospitals and public buildings by further funding for Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme.

The lives of more homeowners, particularly in rural areas who live off the gas grid, will be transformed with upgrades to their heating systems through the Homes Upgrade Grant and further funding for the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund will continue upgrades to social housing.

Northern Ireland has a large rural population, and **the Ulster Unionist Party will ensure the next Executive prioritises support for green home heating**, especially in rural areas and that NI is fully included in all UK plans for Greener Buildings.

Protecting our Natural Environment

The National Landscapes strategy will play a key role in meeting Britain's commitment to protect and improve 30% of UK land by 2030. Rural jobs are to be created with a £40 million second round of the Green Recovery Challenge Fund which will help generate and maintain thousands of jobs to work on nature conservation and restoration projects that will enhance biodiversity. Natural ecosystems are to be re-established with the creation of 10 long-term Landscape Recovery projects over the next 4 years.

Now that the UK has left the EU, a new Environmental Land Management (ELM) scheme will become a key vehicle in the battle against climate change while continuing support to farmers and quality food production. ELMs are also meant to encourage tree planting and peatland restoration. Productivity Grants will additionally be available for farmers to invest in modern technology to drive efficiencies and greater profits, while reducing emissions.

The agricultural industry is an essential component of the Northern Ireland economy. Farming had £2.2bn gross output in 2020, contributing a gross value added (GVA) of £673 million. Gross turnover from the food and drinks processing industry is estimated to be £5.4 billion with agri-food sector also accounting for approximately 4.6% of total employment in Northern Ireland.

Agriculture is also one of the few sectors with the ability to provide solutions to some of the climate change challenges via carbon sequestration and carbon capture, adding value to waste streams, and driving efficiencies through the entire agri-food supply chain.

The Ulster Unionist Party recognises the importance of agriculture to the Northern Ireland economy and will continue to ensure farming receives the support it needs in a post-EU and post-CAP environment. DAERA has been slow to develop a 'green' strategy for NI farming and the UUP will make this a priority in the new Executive. Northern Ireland exports nearly half of its agri-food products to UK and it is to be welcomed that as a consequence the independent Climate Change Committee's recognises that a fair contribution by NI to the UK's Net Zero target would be an 82% or better reduction in greenhouse gases by 2050 compared to 1990 levels.

Forest coverage is lower in NI than the rest of the UK (at less than 9%), and significant emissions from peatlands mean that land use is currently a much larger net source of emissions in Northern Ireland compared to the rest of the UK. **Northern Ireland must plant more native trees**, remediate peatland emissions and build a net land use sink over time.

The UUP will support the roll out of measures already active in GB to ensure greater tree planting in Northern Ireland and for NI-tailored policies to incentivise and reward farmers to produce quality food while contributing to climate mitigation.



Green Finance and Innovation

The UK has committed to raising total R&D investment to 2.4% of GDP by 2027 and has published a UK Research and Development Roadmap. The UK plans to accelerate the commercialisation of innovative low-carbon technologies, systems and processes in the power, buildings, and industrial sectors through a £1 billion Net Zero Innovation Portfolio that will focus on 10 priority areas that correspond with the Ten Point Plan, including:

- **Energy storage and flexibility**
- **Bio-energy**
- **Hydrogen**
- **Homes**
- **Direct air capture and advanced CCUS**
- **Industrial fuel switching**
- **Disruptive technologies such as artificial intelligence for energy**

A £100 million investment has already begun in new Greenhouse Gas Removals including Direct Air Capture, which captures carbon dioxide emissions directly from the air and a further £100 million is to be provided for Energy Storage and Flexibility innovation challenges – essential technology as the UK increasingly moves towards a renewables-heavy system to allow energy to be stored for hours or even days.

The UK plans to announce the first Sovereign Green Bonds in 2021 and intends a series of further issuances to meet growing investor demand. These bonds will help fund sustainable projects, provide for infrastructure investment and generate green jobs. The UK – including Northern Ireland – will be well placed to be a leader in the international voluntary carbon markets.

The UK needs a skilled workforce to deliver Net Zero and a Green Jobs Taskforce has been launched. Working with the private sector and unions, it will produce plans for new long-term good quality, green jobs and advise what support is needed for people in changing sectors.



The UK has also committed to publishing the following policy papers, reviews and strategies detailing the UK's commitment to Net Zero by 2050:

- **Energy White Paper**
- **National Infrastructure Strategy**
- **Transport Decarbonisation Plan**
- **Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy**
- **Net Zero Strategy**
- **Heat & Buildings Strategy**
- **Hydrogen Strategy**
- **HMT Net Zero Review**
- **Nature Strategy**

Northern Ireland's contribution to the independent Climate Change Committee's Sixth Carbon Budget for the UK would involve a large sustained increase in investment in Northern Ireland, adding around £1.3 billion annually by 2030. The largest increases are for low-carbon power capacity, retrofit of buildings and the added costs of batteries and infrastructure for electric vehicles. The required growth in investment can be supplied largely by the private sector and savings from fuel costs and increased productivity will offset the investment costs in later years. Accordingly, an estimate of the annualised resource cost tops out at around £300 million per year in the early 2030s.

The scale, expense and technological changes and investments needed to enable Northern Ireland to contribute to the race to Net Zero and to build a New Green Industrial Revolution are such that they can only be achieved through our cherished position in the United Kingdom.

The Ulster Unionist Party, as the leading party of Unionism, is committed to Northern Ireland contributing its fair share to the UK's Net Zero commitments and to delivering a New Green Industrial Revolution. Working closely with Her Majesty's Government in Westminster, the private sector, the City of London and the other devolved administrations the UUP will ensure the nationally announced plans and investments are delivered and fully funded in Northern Ireland.



THE LEADING PARTY OF UNIONISM



The Ulster Unionist Party's declaration of a Climate Emergency, commitment to a Climate Change Bill and determination to deliver a New Green Industrial Revolution within the United Kingdom will be matched by an undertaking to ensure the institutions of the Northern Ireland Assembly, The Executive Office and the Northern Ireland Civil Service are fit for purpose to deliver the cross-cutting policies needed in the race for Net Zero by 2050.

Most notably a failed green energy scheme (RHI) delivered under the direction of the DUP/Sinn Fein led Executive seriously damaged trust in government as businesses dealt with broken promises, maladministration, and botched regulations undermining confidence and faith in any future schemes.

As the leading party of Unionism, the UUP will put the Climate Emergency, the New Green Industrial Revolution and good governance at the heart of government and ensure the Executive Office and the First and Deputy First Minister's take responsibility for driving through the crucial decisions to ensure NI makes a fair contribution to mitigating climate change and deliver jobs and prosperity through new technologies and industries.

Northern Ireland has fallen behind the rest of the UK in combating climate change and preparing for the New Green Industrial Revolution. The current DUP/Sinn Fein led Executive has failed on this and other crucial issues and **The Ulster Unionist Party intends to be the new broom sweeping away the failures of the past and delivering on the promise of the future.**

The UUP will use the Executive office to ensure all departments with responsibilities for Climate Change mitigation – principally the Dept. for the Economy (DfE), the Dept. of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA) and the Dept. for Infrastructure (DfI) – act in a co-ordinated manner to deliver the

Climate Change Bill, climate mitigation actions and the New Green Industrial Revolution.

Climate change mitigation and the New Green Industrial Revolution calls not just for government action but also private sector investment and involvement. The Ulster Unionist Party will encourage private sector investment through a Strategic Delivery Unit (SDU). The SDU will lead on the cross-cutting delivery of the Executive's climate mitigation and New Green Industrial Revolution policies and will encourage and manage private sector investment. The Strategic Investment Board (SIB) may be able to be re-invigorated and re-constituted to act as the Strategic Delivery Unit or a new unit can be formed.

In Northern Ireland's centenary year, we give thanks that we live in such a beautiful part of the world and that we have the privilege of citizenship of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Great privilege brings great responsibility. The Ulster Unionist Party pledges to combat Climate Change in Northern Ireland and across the United Kingdom and to preserve and enhance the beauty of our beloved province for the benefit of future generations.

‘As the leading party of Unionism, the UUP will put the Climate Emergency, the New Green Industrial Revolution and good governance at the heart of government’





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