

# Jobs in Every Constituency

## A Green New Deal Election Manifesto

### Background

To return a sense of hope for the future and economic security for all, the government and all political parties need urgently to consider embracing a 'jobs in every constituency' Green New Deal infrastructure programme. The Green New Deal group came together in 2007 because as economists and environmentalists we were all convinced that a huge economic downturn was imminent and that one answer to it would be a Green New Deal to fund infrastructure that could help tackle climate change and generate large numbers of jobs and business and savings opportunities in every constituency. How to achieve this was detailed in our first report in 2008.<sup>i</sup>

Much has changed since then to improve the potential for a Green New Deal. The impacts of climate change are now ominously clearer, and the political response globally has mostly become more positive, despite Donald Trump. The Paris Agreement of November 2016 has resulted in all 197 signatories of the treaty taking action, with more than 1,500 climate laws and policies in place.<sup>ii</sup> The agreement commits governments to ratchet up targets in the years ahead. To assist this, there have been huge cost reductions and increases in availability of renewables, particularly solar, battery storage and off shore wind in recent years. All China's new electricity demand in 2015 was met with wind and solar.<sup>iii</sup> In 2016, almost 90 per cent of such new power in Europe came from renewables.<sup>iv</sup> More than 10 million people now work in renewables for the first time, 3.4 million in solar alone.<sup>v</sup>

However the world still produces some 80% of its energy from fossil fuels. To speed a UK shift away from this, the Green New Deal group has tended to emphasise the 'Jobs in every constituency' approach, in the expectation that that it will widen general public support for the shift to a jobs rich decarbonisation future. This is also timely given that the Brexit vote has begun to force politicians to at least talk about policies that could help the 'left behind'. There is now much more discussion of the state's role in improving the UK's infrastructure. The most radical and potentially helpful change has been the use of quantitative easing (QE) by the government to bail out the financial services sector. If QE was instead used to help fund a Green New Deal it could provide part of the answer to the first question always raised about any proposal for large scale change, which is 'how are we going to pay for it?'

### The Green New Deal

The Green New Deal would result in a nation-wide carbon emissions reducing infrastructure programme focusing on:

- Making the UK's 30 million buildings super-energy-efficient to dramatically reduce energy bills, fuel poverty and greenhouse gas emissions;
- Accelerating the shift to renewable electricity supplies and storage, given their dramatic drop in price worldwide and increased availability;
- Tackling the housing crisis by building affordable, highly insulated new homes, predominantly on brown field sites;
- Transport policy that concentrates on rebuilding local public transport links;
- Properly maintaining the UK's road and rail system;

- Encouraging electric vehicles for business and personal use and sharing.

This is labour intensive, takes place in every locality and consists of work that is difficult to automate. It also contributes to improving social cohesion and environmental sustainability.

This massive work programme in energy and transport would tackle many existing problems in our society. It would provide a secure career structure for decades. This would require a significant numbers of apprenticeships and the range of long-term jobs provide increased opportunities for the self-employed and local small businesses. This growth in local economic activity would in turn create other jobs to service this increased spending.

In terms of funding, the up front cost of this massive infrastructure programme is likely to eventually run into more than £50 billion a year.<sup>vi</sup> This could be met by traditional government borrowing at present low interest rate, plus the use of 'Green Quantitative Easing' to help rebuild local economies. (This would exploit the ability of the government to create new money without any cost to taxpayers, which has only so far been used to save the financial services sector.) Additional finance could come from fairer taxes and the creation of savings opportunities in local authority bonds and green ISAs, not least to create intergenerational solidarity between savers (who tend to be from older generations) and younger people who would benefit from the jobs created.

It has been estimated that at least £500bn of investment in new low-carbon infrastructure is required over the next 10 years to transform the UK economy, of which £230bn will be required for energy efficiency alone.<sup>vii</sup> Transport for the North (TfN) has stated that investing between £60bn and £70bn in the north of England's antiquated road and rail network between 2020 and 2050 could add almost £100bn in real terms of economic benefit to the UK, along with 850,000 new jobs. Across the country small and relatively cheap transport improvement measures would include improving stations and bus services, park and ride facilities, through to bus priority and cycle lanes, traffic calming schemes, car clubs and bike hire schemes<sup>viii</sup>

These enormous sums would need to be used judiciously to ensure a realistically timetabled, carefully costed, and hence non-inflationary, nationwide initiative to train and employ a fairly paid 'carbon army' to work on this nationwide infrastructure programme.

## A Manifesto for Jobs in Every Constituency

The government should commit to a detailed programme explaining how to generate jobs in every constituency, using for example the energy and transport proposals in the Green New Deal. This would require extensive consultation with local government, businesses and communities to establish what such a programme should look like on the ground.

The government should commit to a massive training programme resulting in a huge range of skills to provide the 'carbon army' of workers needed to bring about a low-carbon future. A carbon finance sector would also be needed to publicise, advice and put into practice the range of large funding packages necessary.

The government must then explain how this approach would both mitigate the effects of any future global economic downturn and help compensate for the expected trends in automation. It must also make clear that a key advantage to such an approach would be to help meet the UK's obligations under the Paris Agreement to curb carbon emissions.

## Contact details

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## Signing this manifesto

If you would like to support this manifesto by becoming a signatory to it email [hinescolin@gmail.com](mailto:hinescolin@gmail.com) and please circulate it to anyone you think might be interested.

## Endnotes

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<sup>i</sup> [https://s.bsd.net/nefoundation/default/page/-/files/A\\_Green\\_New\\_Deal\\_1.pdf](https://s.bsd.net/nefoundation/default/page/-/files/A_Green_New_Deal_1.pdf) .

<sup>ii</sup> [https://www.businessgreen.com/bg/news/3031265/paris-agreement-all-197-signatories-now-taking-national-climate-action?utm\\_source=Greenhouse+Morning+News&utm\\_campaign=63f4d809db-Greenhouse\\_Morning\\_News\\_April\\_30th\\_2018&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_term=0\\_990f8eae78-63f4d809db-123979689](https://www.businessgreen.com/bg/news/3031265/paris-agreement-all-197-signatories-now-taking-national-climate-action?utm_source=Greenhouse+Morning+News&utm_campaign=63f4d809db-Greenhouse_Morning_News_April_30th_2018&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_990f8eae78-63f4d809db-123979689)

<sup>iii</sup> <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/eg.use.comm.fo.zs?end=2015&start=1960>

<sup>iv</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2017/feb/09/new-energy-europe-renewable-sources-2016>

<sup>v</sup> <http://www.rechargenews.com/wind/1486824/more-than-10-million-people-now-work-in-renewables-irena>

<sup>vi</sup> <https://www.greennewdealgroup.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/Green-New-Deal-5th-Anniversary.pdf>

<sup>vii</sup>

[https://www.e3g.org/docs/Accelerating\\_the\\_transition\\_to\\_a\\_low\\_carbon\\_economy\\_The\\_case\\_for\\_a\\_Green\\_Infrastructure\\_Bank.pdf](https://www.e3g.org/docs/Accelerating_the_transition_to_a_low_carbon_economy_The_case_for_a_Green_Infrastructure_Bank.pdf)

<sup>viii</sup> [https://bettertransport.org.uk/sites/default/files/research-](https://bettertransport.org.uk/sites/default/files/research-files/Improving%20local%20transport%20helps%20the%20economy%20-%20experience%20from%20the%20LSTF.pdf)

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