



NATIONAL POLICY FORUM 2021

Environment,
Energy
and Culture



Britain is at a fork in the road. This must now be a moment to think again about the country that we want to be.

We can either go back to the same insecure and unequal economy that's been so cruelly exposed by the virus. Or we can seize this moment, and go forward to a future that builds a more secure and prosperous economy.

This consultation, alongside the Policy Review led by our Party Chair Anneliese Dodds, presents us with an opportunity to set out a bold vision for a brighter future as we emerge from the pandemic.

This is a chance for us to address what matters most to people, and the eight consultation documents reflect this. From ensuring children are at the heart of our recovery from Covid-19, to making the green new deal work for all; from repairing the foundations of our economy, to ending violence against women and girls, this consultation is an opportunity for us to work out what it takes to make Britain the best place to grow up and grow old in.

Throughout the consultation there will be a number of online member events so that my colleagues in the Shadow Cabinet can directly hear your views on the eight consultation topics, and I encourage you to get involved. Whether you submit your views at an event or through Labour Policy Forum, whether as an individual or as part of a group, I look forward to hearing your insights. By connecting all parts of our Party in this discussion, together we can build a brighter future post-pandemic.

Keir Starmer
Leader of the Labour Party

Thank you for your involvement in the Labour Party's 2021 National Policy Forum (NPF) Consultation. Through this consultation we want to listen to our members, supporters and stakeholders on how the next Labour government can make the UK the best place to grow up, grow old and live in.

This paper is one of eight policy documents published by the Labour Party as part of the consultation this year. Each document will look at the current situation in the UK and the policy challenges we face, followed by a set of questions on the way forward. There is no need to answer every one of these questions, nor is there a specific way in which to answer them. We suggest using the questions to stimulate your thoughts on what you think the main issues are in the document's policy area.

You can write your response as an individual, or as a collective through your local party or organisation. Once you have drafted your response, please submit it to us through Labour Policy Forum: www.policyforum.labour.org.uk. For more information on how to make a submission, see **www.policyforum.labour.org.uk/consultation-submission-guide**.

On the website you can also find out more ways to get involved with the consultation, including full information on our programme of member e-roundtable events. You can also read the seven other consultation documents which might be of interest to you as well. While we are primarily asking for policy ideas related to the eight consultation topics this year, if you have an idea or issue on another topic please do submit this on the website too.

We look forward to hearing your policy ideas on how we can make Britain the best place to grow up, grow old and live in.

Want to know more about how Labour makes its policy?

You can learn more about the Labour Party's policy making process on our Resource Hub **www.policyforum.labour.org.uk/resource-hub**.

You can also follow us on Twitter **[@labpolicyforum](https://twitter.com/labpolicyforum)** for all of the latest policy development news and events.

Accessible Materials

The Labour Party is an inclusive member-based organisation that prides itself on being accessible to all who share its values. If you would like an accessible version of these documents, please email us at **policydevelopment@labour.org.uk** to discuss how we can best accommodate your requirements.

Just Transition: making the green transformation work for all of us

The climate and nature emergency is an unprecedented challenge – not only for the UK, but for the world. According to the United Nations, we have fewer than ten years remaining to keep global temperature rises below 1.5°C and avert the worst impacts of catastrophic climate change. The actions we take as a country and a world between now and 2030 will be defining for generations to come.

Transitioning to zero carbon and restoring the natural world will require us to transform many of the things we do, from the way we travel and the cars we drive to the way we heat our homes, use our land and power our country. These are significant changes, and delivering them will require a truly national effort. However, they also present a once-in-a-generation opportunity: to improve living standards, create good jobs, and rectify the inequalities that scar the UK. We remain the most regionally imbalanced economy in Europe, and many of our communities still bear the scars of forced deindustrialisation in the 1980s and 90s. The green transformation must not repeat these mistakes and leave people and places behind once again.

Yet as things stand that is exactly what is happening. While the market for electric vehicles continues to grow, you are four times more likely to own one if you live in the South East compared to the North East. While millions of households in the UK are now powered by renewable electricity, millions suffer from fuel poverty too. And while wind farms continue to be built off the shores of the UK, too often the factories and supply chains which build them – and the jobs they provide – are located on the other side of the world. If all we do is put a green coat of paint on our unequal, insecure economy, then it will be the richest who continue to benefit from the green transformation – and the most vulnerable who lose out.

Labour is clear then, that as we transform our economy, we need to do so in a way that makes it fairer, more secure, and more prosperous. A “just transition” can be our lever to improve living standards, create good jobs and rectify the inequalities that still scar the UK – to make our country once again the best place in the world to grow up, the best place to build a career, and the best place to grow old in.

The challenges

After over a decade in power, the Conservatives have shown they are not up to the task of delivering such a just transition. The Government's own advisors – the Committee on Climate Change – have repeatedly warned that they are well off track from meeting their legally binding climate targets, and this gap continues to grow. Their spending plans pale in comparison to those of our European neighbours, let alone those of a resurgent United States under Joe Biden. It is clear that we need to raise our ambition to face up to the climate and nature emergency, and fast.

Yet even when the ambition is there, delivery is too often lacking. The central pillar of the Government's own so-called green recovery was the Green Homes Grant, which aimed to support homeowners to insulate their houses, saving emissions and creating jobs in the process. Delivery of the scheme was privatised and outsourced, as we have become accustomed to under this Government, and the result has been a fiasco. Installers have not been paid, homeowners have been unable to get grants, and only five per cent of funds available were disbursed. Rather than fix the scheme by replacing the outsourced and privatised approach with one that puts local authorities and the public sector in the driving seat, the Government has slashed it by £1 billion, with no replacement currently planned.

Underpinning these failures of both ambition and delivery is the fact that the Tories are not willing to accept the central, active role of Government at the scale we need. The climate and nature emergency is the ultimate collective action problem: we cannot simply sit back and hope that technological optimism, coupled with blind faith in the market, will deliver the changes we need. To deliver a truly just transition Government will need to work proactively with businesses, workers, trade unions and communities across the UK to find common solutions, coordinate delivery, and where necessary step in to get the job done.

The way forward

Labour would take a different approach, transforming our country – making it fairer, more secure, and more prosperous. This means using the green transformation to create good job opportunities across our urban and rural communities; redistributing power so local communities can shape their own futures; and building the infrastructure, from warm homes to flood barriers, which will keep people safe. We know this is possible. Just transition plans implemented by our sister parties in Government are making a difference to the lives of millions – from Spain to Denmark.

We've already started building our own alternative – a distinctively Labour just transition for the UK. In November, building on evidence gathered through last year's National Policy Forum Consultation, we called for a £30 billion green stimulus to be brought forward by Government to create 400,000 jobs across the country. In March, we started to lay these plans out in more detail, calling for an 'electric vehicle revolution' in every part of the country. These were ambitious proposals to back Britain's car manufacturers, create jobs, and make owning a zero-emission vehicle an option for all.

There are countless jobs and sectors that will be central to making the transition possible, and many more that will be irrevocably changed by it. It is our job to ensure that these changes are for the better. Existing workers need to be protected, and their conditions at work strengthened where necessary. This is crucial not only for individual workers, but for entire communities whose collective identities have been shaped by pride in industry – from car manufacturing in Sunderland and the West Midlands to the nuclear industry in West Cumbria. These industries need to be supported to adapt and seize the opportunities of transition, and the opportunities that they bring made available to future generations too. Unlike the Tories, Labour will never abandon communities to mass joblessness or managed decline.

With a burgeoning unemployment crisis for young people in particular, we also need to invest in the jobs and opportunities of the future. There are so many jobs that will need doing: in manufacturing, in building and insulating homes, in creating new green spaces and in constructing the digital and low-carbon infrastructure of the future. That they are not being done already is less a question of technical limits but of imagination and political will.

But tackling the climate emergency requires more than just a jobs plan. Beyond the stimulus, Labour believes that the UK needs a Green New Deal. This means that alongside investment in the industries that will help us decarbonise, we also need to transform our economy. A Labour Green New Deal is just as much about industrial democracy, democratic public ownership, and workers' rights as it is about investing in green jobs. Ultimately, we need a plan for both economic justice and climate justice- tackling the inequalities of wealth and power that for too many decades have been hardwired into our economic and political system.

Above all, we need to ensure that these changes have democratic legitimacy, and are not simply handed down as diktats from Westminster, Whitehall or the boardrooms of powerful corporations. Profound changes to the way people live their lives should, where possible, be determined at a local level by institutions accountable to their communities, including our devolved, regional and local administrations.

Questions:

1. How can we best protect workers in industries that must be scaled down or decarbonised as part of the green transformation?
2. How can we best create good, new jobs in the low-carbon industries of the future, both through direct public action and through providing incentives for the private sector?
3. How can we best ensure that all green jobs are good jobs, with world leading terms and conditions, high pay, and a guaranteed right to union representation?
4. What local, regional and national delivery bodies – public or private – need to be introduced to support the creation of green jobs?
5. What measures – from public consultation and citizens assemblies to worker and community oversight of transition projects – need to be brought in to ensure that the climate transition has democratic legitimacy?