



## **Haringey Labour Climate Action**

(incorporating Hornsey and Wood Green and Tottenham Labour Parties)

**July 2020**

**We publish this newsletter four times a year for circulation amongst Labour Party members and other concerned people. We would welcome comments, suggestions and contributions from readers. Please contact [Chrisjbarker46@gmail.com](mailto:Chrisjbarker46@gmail.com). Opinions expressed here are not necessarily the views of the Labour Party.**

### **What we stand for**

Our general aim is promote action and change through raising awareness that:

- Climate change and environmental degradation are primary and urgent global survival issues - they are already destroying livelihoods and the planet, and need to be urgently and dramatically addressed to prevent further potentially disastrous consequences throughout the world.
- Climate change and environmental degradation are primary and urgent political issues - the main obstacles to tackling climate change are inadequate government and corporate measures, which in turn are due to short term-ism and putting profit before people and planet.
- Therefore tackling Climate change and environmental degradation provides an opportunity for social and political transformation to a green economy based on socialist principles of sustainable growth, equality, and collective social and global responsibility.

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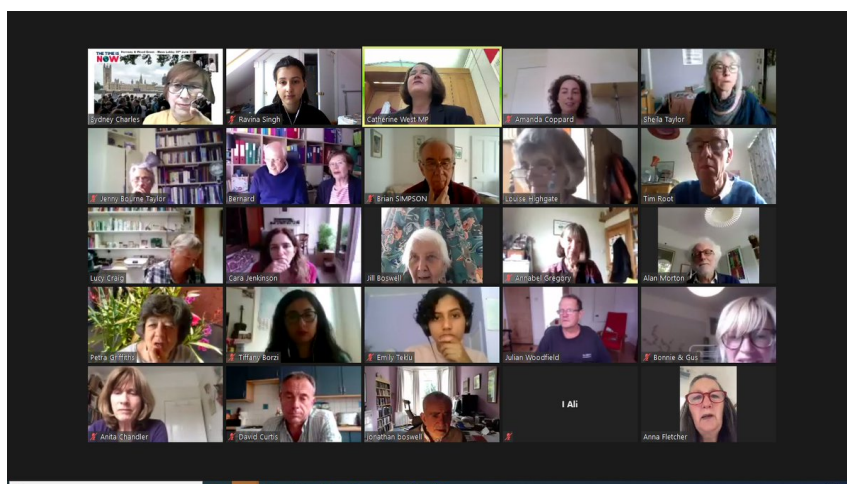
## Report from Parliament: Catherine West MP

There is a real opportunity as we come out of this crisis to build back greener and build back better. I have [written for the Ham & High](#) on the importance of ensuring the climate is centre stage in the recovery and I've also been [pushing Haringey Council](#) to transform Hornsey & Wood Green's streets for cyclists and walkers.

I have no sense from this Government that they are ready to respond to this challenge. Where are the plans for the most ambitious green recovery in the world? Unemployment is soaring and we should be creating new, green jobs for many of those displaced by the crisis and placing the UK as a world-leader in green technologies. Shadow Business Secretary Ed Miliband and Shadow Chancellor Anneliese Dodds launched Labour's consultation on how we achieve a green economic recovery at the beginning of June and I know that hundreds of responses have been received. I hope the report that will be published shortly will be ambitious and bold.

Labour sought to introduce an amendment to the Finance Bill (NC28) that would review its impact on the environment. It would have required the Chancellor to conduct an assessment that looked at the impact on the UK's ability to achieve net zero carbon emissions targets, comply with carbon budgets, air quality standards and bio-diversity and lay it before Parliament within six months of Royal Assent. I was proud to speak in support of the amendment in the Chamber ([you can watch my speech here](#)) and I am very disappointed it was defeated.

I really enjoyed taking part in this year's annual Climate Coalition virtual lobby of Parliament on 30 June. Hornsey & Wood Green always has one of the biggest turnouts, and this year over 35 local residents joined me on Zoom. We had a really interesting discussion on how we get across these important messages to the Conservatives, how we encourage active travel, carbon taxes, the Edmonton Incinerator (something I've already written to Ministers about – [you can see my letter](#)



Taking part in The Time is Now Zoom call with constituents about how we can build a green recovery. Thanks to Sydney Charles for chairing the discussion!

[here](#)) and fuel poverty. Huge thanks go to Sydney Charles for chairing. I fully back the [Climate Coalition's declaration](#) published in advance of the virtual lobby.

Since my last report, I've asked Parliamentary Questions on a range of issues including:

- Pressing the Government to take steps to discourage businesses from reverting back to plastic, disposable cups as a response to the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Asking whether consideration has been given to increasing statutory fines for littering.
- Pushing the Government to do more to improve air quality in London.
- Asking what assessment has been made of the merits of opening up the sale of locally produced renewable electricity.

## **A message from David Lammy MP Tottenham**

The coronavirus is a wake up call in so many ways. Personally, it has been frightening to see black people die from coronavirus at twice the rate than the white population. It's no coincidence that they are more likely to have underlying health conditions, live in overcrowded housing where the disease can spread, and have insecure jobs that prevent them from self-isolation.

What is even more frightening is that climate change increases the intensity and prevalence of pandemics like coronavirus. Biodiversity disturbance increases the chance of contact between humans and animals, animals that may be transmitting infectious disease. When we talk about the effects of climate change, then, coronavirus opens our eyes to the unequal effects that climate breakdown will have on black and minority ethnic populations.

As the climate continues to decay, the global south will now be the first to drown in floods, die in droughts, starve from desertification, flee from coastal erosion and choke from pollution. It's estimated that by 2050, there will be 1 billion environmental refugees.

In the U.S, 68% of black people live within thirty miles of a coal-fired power plant. 1.5 million people of colour live in areas vulnerable to contamination. Black people don't just live in sacrifice zones that are more prone to environmental decay. They live under institutions that distribute the effects of climate change unequally. Hurricanes, pandemics and floods in the western world aren't racist. But deep racial inequality means communities of colour are far less likely to survive. 93% of the victims of Hurricane Katrina were black. During the Flint water crisis, 77% of the children in areas of high lead levels were African American.

While climate change is an existential threat to humanity as a whole, there is no climate justice without racial justice. That's because, as climate breakdown continues to accelerate – as sea levels rise, infectious diseases spread, resource scarcity increases, and extreme weather intensifies – no prizes will be awarded for guessing who is left to drown, starve and burn alive first.

## **Labour's National Policy Forum**

Following the 2019 General Election Labour's National Policy Forum (NPF) entered a new policy making cycle. They ask for members' insight and ideas on how Labour can re-shape the policy platform to win the next General Election and ensure a fairer Britain for all.

At the same time Ed Miliband launched a consultation on how to create an ambitious green economic recovery.

Haringey Labour Climate Action has responded to relevant aspects of these consultations. Here are summaries of these responses. If you would like copies of the full responses please email [chrisjbarker46@gmail.com](mailto:chrisjbarker46@gmail.com).

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## **Economy Business and Trade**

Our response stresses that we must mobilise NOW for measures that both address the immediate crisis and contain the building blocks for a just sustainable recovery. We must urgently resist government moves to incorporate their centralised, corporate measures, which have proved so ineffective, into their recovery programme. 'After the crisis', whenever that is, will be too late.

It proposes:

A Green New Deal with central banks, public investment and fiscal stimulus measures prioritising an ambitiously targeted primarily green component; assistance for fair, sustainable investment, and higher taxes on emissions, pollution and excessive corporate profit.

A Green Investment Bank with Green Investment Bonds for enterprises including R&D, renewable energy and storage, sustainable social housing, transport and agriculture, and social infrastructure. Subsidies and loans to be conditional on genuine, targeted and monitored sustainable measures.

A Just Transition to green jobs based on genuine consultation with trade unions, employers and communities, with free training and education part-funded by employers' levies, focused on our most deprived regions and sectors.

Increased national capacity and resilience with measures to counter potential 'capital flight' and reduce reliance on imports (with unnecessary air and shipping miles), within an international regulatory framework supporting global justice and resilience for poorer countries.

Increased local capacity and resilience through funding and empowerment of local authorities and community SME's, cooperatives and ownership schemes. Prioritisation of sustainable job creation eg retrofit, small scale renewables, public transport, low traffic infrastructure, social housing and community food and planting schemes, alongside social care and community support which are also low carbon.

Common ownership and control where this benefits sustainability or local democracy, eg rail, energy, pharmaceuticals.

Radical land reform covering transparency, monopoly ownership, and the fire-sale of public land, to facilitate social housing, biodiversity and sustainable agriculture schemes.

Strict sustainability standards for all products and services, with international cooperation and dynamic alignment with the EU to gain business acceptance. Immediate regulations for all new construction.

Recognition that well-being is essential for a healthy, sustainable economy, with social reforms including:

- A comprehensive, sufficient, non-conditional Minimum Income Guarantee for all.
- Abolition of unfair immigration controls, the hostile environment, and NRPF.
- Major benefits and social care reforms, providing immediate, adequate, non-judgemental support where needed.
- Stronger control over quality, cost, and rights for renters, landlord incentives for retrofit and energy efficiency.
- End to the gig economy and restoration and extension of trade union and employment rights to all sectors and sizes of workplace, including Health and Safety enforcement and equal rights for ALL.

Massive promotion to win broad support for a positive vision of a Green New Deal with an alternative model of growth and GDP that includes environmental and social development and sustainable, steady-state well-being of people and planet.

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## Environment and Energy

According to the International Energy Agency the next six months are our last chance to avert a carbon rebound and current stimulus packages will play crucial role in determining the fate of the next '30 years and beyond.' The government is therefore urged to adopt an ambitious set of cross-sectoral measures. These will require a robust regulatory framework for sustainable practice including strong international co-operation and compliance with dynamic EU standards as a minimum. The UK has a particular historic responsibility to lead by submitting a Nationally Determined Contribution to the UN straightaway and setting an example to other countries.

There should be a carrot-and-stick approach with adjustment of taxes and subsidies to incentivise green measures, and disincentives for environmentally-harmful ones. All supported industries must be required to submit plans for a circular economy approach in consultation with trade unions, environmental experts and local communities.

Some examples are:

- [Airlines](#) – drastic measures to reduce flights and emissions by agreed deadlines
- [Motor Industry](#) - commitment to timetable to convert to electric plus R & D to reduce the latter's environmental costs such as extraction of precious metals.
- [Investment in green transport infrastructure](#) Scrappage schemes for diesel vehicles. Higher taxation on diesel and petrol. Incentives to help the public to adopt active travel, to develop R & D
- [Merchant shipping](#) – incentives to develop R&D for renewable energy
- [Agriculture and food industry](#)-a radical reform of farm-retail (supermarket) relationships to reduce abuses in both sectors
- [Food Industry](#) – a programme of measures to reduce air miles, dumping of cheap food imports, food waste, packaging and plastics, and demands on farmers which force them into over-production.
- [Agriculture](#) – subsidies and incentives to switch from meat and dairy production, over-production and soil degradation, factory farming, ecological damage and destruction of biodiversity
- [Fossil fuels](#) – transition to renewables by an agreed deadline
- [Energy](#) – Government funding and support for common ownership and control, with local small-scale renewable generation, storage and distribution networks
- [Construction](#) – programme for transition to and training for green jobs for retrofit & new building

We need to promote and win the argument NOW for an alternative vision for a Green New Deal, including:

- [Regaining control of utilities and transport](#) which will be sustainable, accountable and affordable
- [Regaining management of 'economic levers'](#) in the interest of society and the ecosystem

We need to fight for new environmental protections post-Brexit for example:

- [Agriculture](#) – biodiversity, meat, air-miles
- [Green Belt](#) – the value of green belts needs to be re-framed to optimise adaption to and mitigating climate change and increasing biodiversity.

## **Decarbonising Transport**

The proposals assume that present and future Covid-19 outbreaks are contained and risk of infection reduced to minimal levels. For that to happen and there to be no restrictions on freedom to travel, we need stringent policies to deal with the health risks on public transport in order to restore public confidence.

The most pressing issue is to mitigate the harm caused by cars. Amongst the measures we advocate are more 20mph zones, decreased car parking provision in favour of more footway space, more cycle lanes and a workplace parking levy with proceeds to improve public transport. These measures are in addition to wider footways, pop-up cycle lanes and provisions to make public transport safer which are already being done.

The rest of the document assumes that, at some time in the future, the restrictions on travel due to the Covid-19 crisis will end.

28% of UK greenhouse gas emissions come from transport and of that 55% comes from cars. It is projected that these emissions are going to continue to rise unless action is taken. We advocate a system of road user charging and oppose the government's £27 billion new roads plan.

Most pollution from road vehicles comes from fossil fuels and we therefore urge the electrification of road vehicles and a reduction in the number of cars. We advocate active travel modes, walking and cycling in addition to public transport. We are keen that freight movement is transferred from road to rail or water wherever possible.

Most of Britain's rail system needs to be electrified. There is no viable alternative fuel for heavy freight trains or high speed passenger trains.

Despite the fact that modern aircraft are much cleaner than older ones and this advance is likely to continue it is unlikely that there will be sufficient change in the time available and we therefore advocate a moratorium on new runway capacity taxes on airlines.

Urgent action is also needed to reduce the emission of gasses by ships and there are many ways by which this can be achieved.

Finally there needs to be concerted moves to make it less necessary to travel or to move goods.

## **Green Recovery**

Following the election of Labour's new leader, Sir Keir Starmer the National Policy Forum called for responses on some policy areas in the light of the current Covid crisis, including a Green Recovery Consultation. HLCA responded to the ten questions which probed the opportunities and imperatives for immediate actions to emerge from the Covid emergency, whilst delivering a cleaner, greener UK.

The signs that climate damage is accelerating are becoming more and more frequent and serious, so the HLCA response took the line that the UK needs to show leadership and do as much as possible as soon as possible. The HLCA response identified the sectors that have lost jobs, and will need to shrink as the global economy decarbonises and addresses inequality, whether sectoral, regional or diversity related. Redirecting tax income and global capital to 'green' investments and retraining workers from high fossil fuel jobs to low carbon jobs is urgent. The 'co-benefits' of taking these actions are that the new jobs could provide good livings offering dignity and pride. Homes can become warm and comfortable and illness from air pollution could disappear.

Every Government Department needs a forensic focus on decarbonisation and minimising pollution, and the Committee on Climate Change has clear recommendations for each Department <sup>2</sup>. But early signs are that the Conservatives will ignore these and continue pouring money into their usual exploitation of citizens and planet. Whilst Labour is not in power it will have to use every lever possible to turn round the lumbering Conservative machine towards an urgent Green Recovery.