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IPPR, the Institute for Public Policy Research, is the UK’s leading progressive think tank. We are an independent charitable organisation with our main offices in London. IPPR North, IPPR’s dedicated think tank for the North of England, operates out of offices in Manchester and Newcastle, and IPPR Scotland, our dedicated think tank for Scotland, is based in Edinburgh.

Our primary purpose is to conduct and promote research into, and the education of the public in, the economic, social and political sciences, science and technology, the voluntary sector and social enterprise, public services, and industry and commerce. Other purposes include to advance physical and mental health, the efficiency of public services and environmental protection or improvement; and to relieve poverty, unemployment, or those in need by reason of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship, or other disadvantage.

IPPR
14 Buckingham Street
London
WC2N 6DF
T: +44 (0)20 7470 6100
E: info@ippr.org
www.ippr.org
Registered charity no: 800065 (England and Wales), SC046557 (Scotland)

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THE IPPR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMISSION

Caroline Lucas
Green party MP for Brighton Pavilion
(Co-chair)
Laura Sandys
Former Conservative party MP and Chair of the BEIS/Ofgem Energy System Data Taskforce (Co-chair)
Beth Farhat
Regional Secretary of the Northern TUC and IPPR Trustee
Charlotte Hartley
Member of 2050 Climate Group and member of the Scottish Just Transition Commission
Tom Kibasi
Political writer, researcher, and former Director of IPPR
Kate Raworth
Senior Visiting Research Associate at Oxford University's Environmental Change Institute
David Symons
Global Future Ready programme leader at WSP, Director of Aldersgate Group
Farhana Yamin
Associate Fellow at Chatham House, founder Track 0 and Extinction Rebellion activist
Michael Jacobs
Professoral Fellow and Head of Engagement and impact at SPERI

Hilary Benn
Labour MP for Leeds Central and former Environment Secretary (Co-chair)
Catherine McGuinness
Chairman, Policy and Resources Committee, City of London Corporation
Paul Booth CBE
Chair of Tees Valley Local Enterprise Partnership
Angela Francis
Chief Advisor, Economics and Economic Development at WWF-UK
Fatima-Zahra Ibrahim
Campaigner and climate activist
Paul Nowak
Deputy General Secretary, Trade Union Congress
Steve Waygood
Chief Responsible Investment Officer, Aviva Investors
Anna Taylor
Student climate striker and activist
Dr Emily Shuckburgh
Director of Cambridge Zero, University of Cambridge

ABOUT THE COMMISSION
The IPPR Environmental Justice Commission (EJC) is a landmark initiative building on IPPR’s award winning work on environmental breakdown and its Commission for Economic Justice. The commission is co-chaired by Hilary Benn, Caroline Lucas and Laura Sandys, and they are joined by commissioners drawn from business, activism, academia, civil society, and trade unionism.

The central aim of the commission is to present an ambitious, positive vision shaped around people’s experiences and needs, and develop a plan of action that integrates policy both to address the climate and environmental emergencies and to deliver economic and social justice.

The commission’s final report will be published in 2021. Find out more at: https://www.ippr.org/environment-and-justice
NOTE
The IPPR Environmental Justice Commission presents its final report in order to stimulate vital public debate. Individual members of the Commission agree with the broad thrust of the arguments made in this report, but they should not be taken to agree with every word or recommendation. Commissioners serve in an individual capacity, and this report should not be taken as representing the views of the organisations with which they are affiliated.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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"Because together we can do this."

Juror from the South Wales Valleys citizens' jury
The Environmental Justice Commission was established in May 2019 in recognition that action to address the accelerating climate and nature emergencies can be about more than staving off the worst; it can be about imagining a better world which we can build together. A future where people and nature can thrive; with resilient local communities, good jobs, successful low-carbon businesses; and where inequalities are reduced and opportunities offered to all. A future where progress is measured by the quality of life, security, and wellbeing of all citizens as well as the health of our natural world.

To realise this vision will require a new approach which understands the inextricable link between addressing the climate and nature crises with the necessary speed and ambition, and simultaneously tackling economic and social injustice. The transformation must be rooted in fairness – not only because the poorest communities are least responsible for these crises and invariably the worst affected, but because unless action to restore nature and decarbonise the economy is rooted in social and economic justice, it simply won’t succeed.

We are proud to be co-chairs of this important commission that not only proposes ambitious policies to achieve net zero as soon as possible, but also examines the obstacles to a successful transition and identifies measures to overcome them. We recognise that the public has a veto; their concerns must be addressed, and their consent won. If the transition is managed poorly, or not managed at all, then it could threaten to make people’s lives harder, including those who are already losing out from the current economic system. We cannot make changes that further embed unfairness in our society; on the contrary, this is an opportunity to put fairness at the centre of all we do.

A successful transition means that people must be at the heart of the policymaking process, and those most affected by change must be the ones to shape it. This approach not only builds deeper and broader public support which can endure short-term political cycles but also, as this report shows, deliver better and fairer outcomes too.

We have therefore put people at the centre not just of our recommendations, but also our approach to developing them. Since 2019, we have held deliberative workshops, listening exercises and citizens’ juries around the UK with people from many different walks of life. Despite the pandemic, we have worked with citizens in Doncaster, Tees Valley and County Durham, London, the South Wales Valleys, Thurrock and Aberdeenshire. These communities were chosen precisely because they are likely to face different challenges as a consequence of the transition to net zero.

Throughout our work, we have also been able to engage with and hear from community groups, workers and their trade unions, businesses, civil society, and national and local politicians. We have spoken to policymakers from around the world, learning lessons – both from what has worked and what hasn’t – from transitions in other countries. The learning from these many conversations is distilled in this report.

This is a profound moment of change. The effects of Covid-19 have brought into sharp relief the government’s prime responsibility to keep the public safe from
the major shocks, challenges, and threats to our society. It has also reminded us of the scale and speed at which governments can act when the true nature of an emergency is recognised.

The threats posed by the climate and nature emergencies are orders of magnitude greater than even the worst that we have witnessed throughout these past grim months. If the pandemic has reminded us that far-reaching change to how our economies work is possible, history shows that we have been able to respond to crises by redesigning the economy, as we did in the aftermath of the second world war.

This final report of the Environmental Justice Commission argues for a similarly ambitious approach – one that can secure a cleaner, greener economy, and that is fairer and improves wellbeing too, restoring the health of people and the natural world. It offers a plan that is optimistic and practical, both honest about the challenges we face and committed to seizing this moment to improve lives and offer opportunities for all, ensuring – crucially – that no-one is left behind.

This report has been shaped by the views, wisdom and recommendations of the people we have engaged with across the UK over the past two years. We are immensely grateful to them all.

Co-chairs of the IPPR Environmental Justice Commission

Hilary Benn MP
Caroline Lucas MP
Laura Sandys
INTRODUCTION

This final report of the Environmental Justice Commission sets out a vision for the future of the UK.

Part one defines the shifts needed in the UK’s approach to addressing the climate and nature crises and makes the case for a ‘new social contract’, to deliver a transition that is both rapid and fair.

Part two, in five chapters, outlines the practical steps we propose. Each contains proposals on what we think needs to be done, when and by whom.

The commission’s recommendations have been shaped by the experience, insights, and priorities of the jurors of our four citizens’ juries held across the UK in 2020-21 (see box ‘Listening to the public’ and for a detailed overview of lessons from the citizens jury see chapter 8 ‘Notes from a small island’).

A summary of the arguments and recommendations of the commission are set out in the accompanying summary report.

LISTENING TO THE PUBLIC

Beginning in 2019, the Environmental Justice Commission has held deliberative workshops, listening exercises and citizens’ juries around the UK. From managing extreme weather events to transitioning away from high-polluting industries, we heard from communities across the UK facing significant challenges.

Tees Valley and County Durham is home to 60 per cent of the UK’s energy-intensive industry (Tennison 2017) and generates carbon emissions three times higher than the UK average (O’Brien et al 2017). It faces significant risks if the transition is badly managed but could benefit from jobs created in low-carbon industries. There’s also potential to develop its substantial natural assets as a carbon sink.

“Even when people don’t necessarily come from the same background and beliefs, we have similar thoughts about the importance of positive action and trying to change for the better.”

Juror from the Tees Valley and County Durham citizens’ jury

In the South Wales Valleys there are lessons to learn from the area’s poorly managed industrial transitions of the past. Investment and government action are needed to move away from high carbon industries and harness “the green lungs for the region” (MacBride-Stewart 2020), the rich green landscape of the valleys.

“It doesn’t matter how knowledgeable you are about the subject beforehand, you can still contribute [to the citizens’ jury] and you will be listened to.”

Juror from the South Wales Valleys citizens’ jury

1 See: http://www.ippr.org/research/publications/fairness-and-opportunity
2 All quotes are drawn from the reports of the citizens juries held by IPPR (IPPR 2021a, 2021b, 2021c and 2021d) or directly from the recordings of the juries themselves.
Thurrock, by contrast, sits on the Thames estuary 20 miles east of central London, and is part of Essex’s commuter belt. Thurrock’s economy is tied to its three international ports and the area acts as the industrial gateway to the South East. Consequently, carbon emissions from transport in the region are two-thirds higher than the national average (Transport East 2020). As well as being key to the economy, the estuary is also the focal point of Thurrock’s natural assets, and active management and restoration of its salt marshes could sequester carbon and provide much needed flood protection (Laffoley and Grimsditch 2009).

Aberdeenshire is the ‘oil capital of Europe’, and Aberdeen has become central to discussions about the ‘just transition’ for workers in carbon intensive industries. More than 10 per cent of total employment in Aberdeen City and Aberdeenshire is currently in the oil and gas industry (over 24,000 jobs in total) (Emden, Murphy and Gunson 2020). Yet, across the UK, decommissioning oil and gas rigs, increasing wind power, carbon capture and storage and producing low-carbon hydrogen, could create around 275,000 jobs (ibid). Much of the infrastructure – such as pipe networks, port infrastructure and storage sites – and, crucially, skills and experience needed for these jobs can be found in the oil and gas sector already, giving workers a crucial role to play in the transition. There is also more to Aberdeenshire than oil and gas. With native pinewoods, bogs, sand dunes, mountains and coast, this diverse landscape is also home to over one-quarter of Scotland’s arable farming areas (Aberdeenshire Council 2017).

Jobs in Doncaster and Yorkshire and the Humber, where we held a citizen workshop, are disproportionately reliant on carbon intensive industries, and South Yorkshire is regularly subject to major flooding.

These very different communities across the UK all recognised the extent of the challenges ahead, but each one provided optimistic, ambitious proposals for action, shaped by the unique characteristics of their areas.

From the opening sessions of our first citizens’ jury in Tees Valley and County Durham in October 2020 through to the closing minutes in Aberdeenshire in March 2021, we have been overwhelmed by the good humour, openness and interest shown by every juror who took part. We have worked with 84 jurors over 1,600 combined hours of deliberation and developed over 100 recommendations. It has been a privilege to get to know the jurors and learn about their communities, their anxieties and their hopes for the future.3

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3 More information about the citizens’ juries carried out for the commission by IPPR can be found in the individual briefings (IPPR 2021a, 2021b, 2021c and 2021d).
CHAPTER 1.

THE CASE FOR CHANGE: THE SIX SHIFTS
Listening to people’s experiences and aspirations, we have heard about the many challenges that the UK faces and the anxieties of the people who face them, but we have also heard about the numerous opportunities that could be realised as the country enters this decade of profound change.

Drawn from the insights of jurors from our citizens’ juries across the UK (see box in the introduction of this report), in this chapter we set out the **six major shifts that are needed in the UK’s approach to addressing the climate and nature crises** if we are to maximise and fairly share the benefits and opportunities of the transition, minimise and share the burdens of the risks, and move at the pace that these crises demand.

### SIX SHIFTS IN APPROACH NEEDED FOR A SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION

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Source: Authors’ analysis

#### 1. FROM A PROBLEM TO BE MITIGATED TO AN OPPORTUNITY TO BE SEIZED

“There is an untapped treasure in the Valleys... There is a sleeping dragon here waiting to breathe fire into a recovery which will help the planet as well as the UK.”

Juror from the South Wales Valleys citizens’ jury

Despite the scale of the climate and nature crises – and the impacts, from flooding to extreme heatwaves, which are already with us – the UK must view these challenges not just as a problem to be mitigated, but an opportunity to be seized. The benefits of ambitious action are substantial for both the public and the environment – from the creation of decent jobs, to lower energy bills and significant public health benefits, to burgeoning wildlife and a healthier planet.
All of the communities we spoke with across the UK recognised the challenges of the transition but also pointed to the huge potential of fully drawing upon the assets, skills and talent that lie in their communities.

“We have huge assets - from our local industry to the skills, talent and expertise of all who live in Aberdeenshire. There is a huge opportunity to build on these strengths, but we need a vision and a strategy to maximise them.”
Aberdeenshire citizens' jury

Our existing economic system is driving both environmental damage and deep economic and social unfairness (IPPR 2020). In transforming our economy to deliver better outcomes for the environment we can, and must, also improve the quality of life for everyone.

2. FROM FAIRNESS AS AN AFTERTHOUGHT TO FAIRNESS AS A FOUNDATION

“No one can be left out. A fair response to the climate and nature emergencies needs to increase equality in society.”
Tees Valley and County Durham citizens' jury

The debate about whether we transition to a clean economy is largely resolved but the debate over how we transition has only just begun. The central question to that debate is how it can be done in a way that is fair; in the words of Chris Stark, head of the Climate Change Committee, it is “almost the only question” (Garman 2021). This is because, as we have seen with the ‘gilets jaunes’ protests in France, delivering the transition in a fair way is crucial to securing legitimacy for and efficacy of the transition and building enduring public and political support.

“We need to make sure that all decisions that are made are fair at the point of decision-making and throughout their implementation.”
Thurrock citizens' jury

This message was reinforced over and over again by the people we spoke to and has been supported by the findings of similar processes such as the UK Climate Assembly.

This is about more than just avoiding unfairness arising in the transition itself. It's also about addressing existing unfairness across our economy and society. The aspects of fairness that the people we spoke to were anxious to have addressed were as follows.

The distribution of costs for individuals, businesses, and the public purse

This includes taxation, everyday expenses like energy bills, as well as the price of purchasing sustainable food, and the cost of low-carbon goods and services such as energy efficiency retrofits.

“Action should not be regressive and make life harder for people already struggling. People should be supported to make the changes they need to.”
Aberdeenshire citizens' jury

See: https://www.climateassembly.uk
The questions of fairness both within and between different places across the UK

This relates particularly to the distribution of economic investment, the impacts on new and existing jobs, and to who is most affected by the impacts of the climate and nature crises.

“*We believe that the future should be inclusive and we recognise that those [places] who have been historically left behind may need additional support to prosper.*”

South Wales Valleys citizens’ jury

Aspects of fairness relating to gender, race, and disability

Jurors were conscious that some people, already disadvantaged by our current economic system, are being impacted disproportionately by the environmental crises and are at risk from badly managed policy responses too, as was underlined in our interim report (IPPR 2020).

“Inequality is a big issue.”

Juror from the Thurrock citizens’ jury

Fairness for younger and future generations

Our jurors were acutely aware of the greater impact that the climate and nature crises will have on younger and future generations and wanted to ensure this was reflected in decision-making.

“I guess it’s not going to have much of an effect on me. But I’ve got children and grandchildren and it is those who are going to be affected.”

Juror from the Tees Valley and County Durham citizens’ jury

Fairness internationally, recognising the varying responsibilities, historic contribution, and capabilities among different countries across the world

Those we spoke with saw the global role and cumulative contribution of the UK to the climate and nature crises and the need for greater responsibly for addressing the problem, as well as the economic benefits that the UK could accrue in taking a leadership role (Webb et al 2021).

“We need to take the rest of the world with us. If you lead the world then business will follow and that will attract investment. If we can build technologies that can be exported, this can create jobs.”

Juror from the Thurrock citizens’ jury

3. FROM BEING DONE TO PEOPLE TO BEING DONE WITH AND BY THEM

“People need to feel that they are part of the change. We need to bring people with us and for it not to feel like we are having things done to us.”

South Wales Valleys citizens’ jury

Moving from an approach that is centralised and remote, to one owned and importantly informed by the public, will be crucial to a successful transition. People are experts in their own lives and aspirations. They have experiences and knowledge which are hugely valuable in designing better policy.

In addition, the transition is now moving from being conducted ‘in the background’ – through the way we generate electricity, for example – to one that will have a noticeable impact on people’s everyday lives: people changing the boiler in their
home, changing their car, switching to public transport, or re-training for a new job. If government is to secure enduring public support, then it needs to take people with it on this journey.

4. FROM SILOS AND INDIVIDUALS TO A WHOLE ECONOMY AND ALL-SOCIETY APPROACH

“My concern throughout is that everything seems to lead back to individuals doing their bit, which is important, but change needs to start on a much wider scale than that.”

Juror from the Thurrock citizens’ jury

The climate and nature crises require collective, systemic and interrelated action. Addressing them also needs system wide coordination, not leaving the public to do all of the heavy lifting.

Too often greater emphasis is put on what individuals must do than on creating the context that makes it easier for people to make the right choice for them and the environment. As our jurors argued, while we all have a role to play, we have to work together to change our systems too. People want a partnership between government, business, workers, civil society and the public. Every part of the economy and society must be involved in the transition if it is to be a success.

“We need a joined-up, collaborative approach if we are to see the scale of change required.”

Tees Valley and County Durham citizens’ jury

However, far from coordinating change across society, too often government fails to work effectively even with itself. Whether at a national, regional, or local level, government too often acts in siloes. Likewise, environmental, economic and social policies are often seen as separate and distinct, having little to do with each other. For example, the UK cannot credibly commit to delivering net zero and restoring nature, and then proceed to support or allow decisions such as building new deep coal mines which will increase global carbon emissions (Deben 2021).

5. FROM TOP-DOWN ALONE TO NATIONAL LEADERSHIP WITH LOCAL OWNERSHIP AND DELIVERY

“Local areas need to create their own plans and priorities based on their local assets. They will need the resources to see these plans through.”

Tees Valley and County Durham citizens’ jury

People want strong leadership from government and see that it can play a powerful role in coordinating a national effort, but it must be designed around empowered localities who own and deliver the tailored solutions.

The response to Covid-19 has shown the power of government and what can be achieved, if the political will is there. That does not mean, however, that the answer is a purely top-down approach. Different areas of the UK have different challenges, assets and opportunities, so a ‘one size fits all policy’ won’t secure a transition that is either fair or effective. By contrast, designing policies with local circumstances in mind, through passing powers down to local communities, can help achieve better and fairer outcomes (Raikes 2020).
6. FROM CLIMATE ALONE TO CLIMATE AND NATURE TOGETHER

“Nature and the local wildlife kind of brings communities together for us all really, even though we live in very different areas throughout Wales.”

Juror from the South Wales Valleys citizens’ jury

The need to address the climate crisis increasingly, and rightly, occupies time within political and policy debates. Yet the nature crisis is often treated as its ‘poorer cousin’, receiving significantly less attention and therefore fewer policy commitments, targets and less investment (Laybourn et al 2019). This matters for two principal reasons.

First, the nature crisis is both of equal importance and intimately linked to the climate challenge. The UK is one of the most nature depleted countries in the world (Hayhow et al 2016). Our destruction of nature actively accelerates global heating, but its repair can help to address it (Laybourn et al 2019). If we are to achieve net zero without sufficiently addressing our wider impact on nature, the consequences for our economy and society would still be profound.

Second, the great importance that people place on nature and access to green space is not reflected in our national conversation. The jurors want to put nature right at the heart of all climate policy and beyond.
Drawing on recommendations from the jurors, we believe that now is the time for a new ‘social contract for a fair transition’. The contract contains six principles, each of which responds to a shift.

The six shifts... ... a new social contract

- **From a problem to be mitigated to an opportunity to be seized**
  - **A people’s dividend**

- **From fairness as an afterthought to fairness as a foundation**
  - **A fairness lock**

- **From being done to people to being done with and by them**
  - **A people-first approach**

- **From top-down to national leadership and local delivery**
  - **National leadership and local delivery**

- **From individuals and silos to a whole-economy and all-society approach**
  - **A whole-economy, all-society approach**

- **From climate and nature alone to climate and nature together**
  - **Valuing what matters**

1. **A people’s dividend**

If we are to seize the opportunities of the transition then all people and communities across the UK must benefit, with the greatest return accruing to those who need it most. This is what we call the ‘people’s dividend’.

“There should be more community ownership of local assets, so that citizens have more control over and a greater stake in the decisions that affect them.”

Tees Valleys and County Durham citizens’ jury

The ‘people’s dividend’ should include:

- universal access to free or affordable services that support sustainable action – for example, free local decarbonised public transport

- the creation of mechanisms for direct ‘dividend payments’ to the public – for example, revenue raised through carbon pricing or payments for household contributions to the energy grid
• the extension of community ownership so that local people have a stake in, and control over, the transition – for example, community owned energy and nature assets
• good quality, well-paid jobs and a voice at work – for example, a funded ‘right to retrain’ for those transitioning from high carbon industries
• increased access to nature and improved wellbeing – for example, transforming neighbourhoods into greener, more social spaces.

2. A fairness lock

The transition the UK is making must be fair. Our jurors provided a clear sense of what a ‘fairness lock’ for climate and nature policies could look like. This lock should move beyond a simple ‘cost of living test’ to one that is more reflective of the different costs and benefits that come with the transition.

“The cost of change – both financial and in how we live – has to be shared fairly.”
South Wales Valleys citizens’ jury

A fairness lock should guarantee:
• procedural fairness – people are fully involved in decision-making, including those who are most disadvantaged
• the fair distribution of costs for consumers and the taxpayer – including carbon pricing that protects those on the lowest incomes
• that all policies will be assessed for how they affect, and involve:
  - places and communities particularly impacted across the UK – no place will be left behind
  - different people and communities including by income, age, gender, race, and disability
  - younger and future generations
• help is put in place ahead of change to allay anxieties and maintain public support – for example, households have the means to transition to low-carbon heating systems before regulations come into place
• that the UK makes a fair contribution internationally – the UK recognises that there are varying responsibilities and capabilities to respond among different countries across the world.

3. A people-first approach

The public want to be part of this transition. They want change brought about with or by them - not done to them.

 “[The area] needs the input of local people with on the ground experience to share with those who have responsibility to make things happen.”
Juror from the Thurrock citizens’ jury

A people-first approach must ensure:
• clear, accessible information about the transition is available to the public – including a public communications plan and ‘one stop shops’ for support
• **the public have a clear role in the creation of plans** – including through a permanent, national citizens’ assembly for climate and nature deliberation and a leading role in local plans too

• **local communities have greater ownership over the decisions that affect them** – including a nationwide commitment to participatory budgeting.

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### 4. National leadership and local delivery

Our jurors were clear that we need national leadership and a strategy to deliver the change needed.

> “Action must reflect the urgency of the situation. We need to act now. Leadership has to be shown by government, but everyone is accountable for taking action and should feel part of making the changes that are required.”

Aberdeenshire citizens’ jury

However, the impacts of the transition will be different in different places. Communities, and their local leaders, have a better understanding of their local areas – the challenges, the assets and the opportunities – and they must be able to shape and deliver their own response.

> “Local people need to be empowered to act. Every area is unique and a ‘one size fits all’ approach isn’t going to work.”

Tees Valleys and County Durham citizens’ jury

In practice, this means:

- The UK government and devolved nations show leadership by developing plans and making investments to manage the transition, but devolving as many powers and resources as is possible

- local areas and communities are able to shape and deliver their own response through consistent, long-term devolution deals.

---

### 5. A whole-economy, all-society approach

Our jurors wanted to see a joined-up approach across governments and their departments, and a partnership approach across the whole of the economy and society too.

> “Decisions need to be joined up with different organisations working together to make the most of the resources and time we have. We shouldn’t be acting in silos.”

South Wales Valleys citizens’ jury

> “We should involve workers and the businesses affected by these regulations in designing and advocating for them.”

South Wales Valleys citizens’ jury

In practice, this means:

- for government, all policies, programmes and investment must be compliant with our collective climate and nature goals – including a net zero and nature rule to ensure no public money is spent on projects which make the problem worse

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5 Participatory budgeting involves the public making decisions over how local budgets are spent.
• the innovation and job creation of the private sector, including small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs);[ldvhjklj;]
• ‘lkjghfsa m, / are harnessed to help us achieve our goals – with government providing an enabling environment through tax incentives, small business loans and regulation
• a partnership must be forged with wider civil society, workers and their trade unions, and businesses, particularly SMEs – including transition plans in carbon intensive industries, drawn up with workers, and engaging with small businesses.

6. Valuing what matters

Our jurors were clear about the high value they place on nature in their lives and the need to protect, invest in and restore it. They had a much broader conception of what a ‘better life for all’ looks like than the often-narrow focus in the national debate on measures such as GDP. To succeed, they believe we must move to a focus on wellbeing, the things that contribute to it, and that matter most to people.

“To bring people with us on this journey we need to see this not as a sacrifice but as a progression to a more sustainable way of life. We need to be positive in our response to these emergencies.”
Aberdeenshire citizens’ jury

In practice, this will mean:
• putting nature on the same footing as climate – including through the creation of a Nature Recovery Committee and similar legally binding targets for the environment
• recognising that a healthy and restored natural environment builds greater climate and economic resilience – for example nature supports sustainable agriculture, underpins productivity, and supports work-life balance
• placing a focus on wellbeing – including introducing a Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and embedding the sustainable development goals as the preferred measures of success for all government policy.

WHAT’S NEXT?
The recommendations made in this report, cover areas where the UK government holds reserve powers and areas where responsibility is devolved across the four nations. The vast majority of our recommendations are relevant for the UK government and the devolved nations but in recognition of the different policy contexts, proposals will need to be adapted to suit the particular circumstances.6

As part of its work, the commission has recognised that action to address the climate and nature crises will necessarily involve change in every sector of the economy. While the commission’s work has been wide ranging, we have sought to focus on the priorities expressed by our citizens juries. Issues not covered by this report include the UK’s energy mix, aviation and shipping, nevertheless we recognise their importance and the necessity for a fair transition.

The five chapters that follow apply the six principles of our social contract across our economy and society.

6 Where costings are presented, they are for the UK government and commensurate funding will be required to support those policies in areas where policy is devolved.
CHAPTER 3.

SHARING POWER
Responding to the climate and nature crises requires involving and empowering people in decision-making. It will mean sharing power.

The UK’s legal commitment to reach net zero by 2050 is the latest possible date by which we need to have transformed the economy and much of the way we live. Across the country there is ambition to go much faster, with Scotland setting a legal target to deliver these changes by 2045 and Wales committed to “do all we can to get there sooner” (Welsh Government 2021a). At a local level, leaders across the country have set targets to reach net zero by 2030.

There is now widespread political consensus on the scale of the challenge we face and willingness to set the targets that address it.

But this will not be a challenge that is met behind the scenes in the corridors of power in Holyrood, the Senedd, Stormont, or Westminster. The urgency of the changes required to our culture, economy and environment will need everyone’s participation. We cannot address the climate and nature crises without the active support of the public.

The communities we have spoken to offer a vision of a better life for the future. This report is grounded in their optimistic, practical view on what could and should be possible if we make the right decisions now.

“Decisions on how to tackle the climate crisis and restore nature need to be guided by a broad range of experts and also the views of the people who will be affected by the decisions.”

Aberdeenshire citizens’ jury

CHANGE CAN’T BE DONE TO PEOPLE; IT MUST BE DONE WITH AND BY THEM

The UK’s efforts to reach net zero and repair the harms we have done to the natural world will fail unless the transition is done in partnership with communities and reflects their hopes and concerns. We do not have time to get this wrong. The public will not accept the change if it is not fair, or they do not perceive it to be. In practice, they have a veto on all climate and nature policies – a veto they can exercise at the ballot box or in the streets.

The gilet jaunes movement in France demonstrated the risk of public anger and resistance when policies do not take account of the potential economic and social impacts. Sparked by president Macron’s proposals to increase fuel tax, protests spread across France and the policy became emblematic of a wider disconnect between policymakers and the challenges people face in their day to day lives (Martin 2019). These protests led Macron to state:

“What I want to make French people understand – notably those who say ‘we hear the president, the government, they talk about the end of the world and we are talking about the end of the month’ – is that we are going to treat both, that we must treat both.”

McNicoll 2018
In London and across the UK, low traffic neighbourhoods have been implemented as part of wider measures to improve public health and increase walking and cycling. Despite the evidence of their positive impact within the most deprived neighbourhoods (Aldred et al 2021), these schemes have provoked significant opposition, fuelled – in part – by anger at the perception that they benefit the wealthiest over the poorest in society (Ellson and Greenwood 2021). Many of these schemes have been quietly and successfully put in place with public support; however isolated examples have been used to tell a story of a lack of consultation and the potential for traffic to be pushed from wealthy neighbourhoods to the main roads, where those on lower incomes tend to live. The legitimate concerns of local residents are amplified by social and traditional media into a much wider rejection of schemes which, if done right, could change how we travel in a way that delivers tangible health and social benefits.

FAIRNESS CAN’T BE AN AFTERTHOUGHT

There is widespread UK public support for more ambitious action on climate and nature. More than two-thirds of the public want to see the UK as a world leader on climate change (Global Witness 2020). In France, the gilet jaunes have gone on to campaign for green measures such as mandatory building insulation (Martin 2019). The issue is not the public’s appetite for change; it is one of public trust and an approach to making policy that too often people feel is disconnected from their priorities.

The scale of action being taken in the UK on the climate and nature crises has to increase but, without careful management, the impacts and opportunities will not be fairly shared. The places that face significant risks, and the people who live there, should therefore be at the heart of policies and plans.

It is because of this that the commission set out to put the views of the public at the heart of our own approach to defining what a fair response to the climate and nature crises looks like. Through our citizens’ juries we have supported four very different communities to deliberate on these issues and they have told us how decisions need to be made in order to ensure that action both in their area and across the UK reflects the urgency of the climate and nature crises, addresses inequality, and delivers tangible benefits in people’s lives.

THE JURIES’ WELLBEING FRAMEWORK: A VISION FOR A BETTER LIFE FOR ALL

Central to each jury’s deliberations was a shared understanding of the things that matter most to them. Each jury was supported to develop their unique definition of wellbeing, with every juror encouraged to share the things that they felt contributed most to their wellbeing and the links between this and their local community and environment. Despite their diverse backgrounds and life experiences, there was much common ground both within and between the juries.

In the closing sessions of each jury, the groups finalised this framework into a powerful statement of a future they believe is possible.

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7 Including the Lee Green and Hither Green scheme in Lewisham, which was changed after significant public anger (Chamberlain 2020).
THE COMBINED WELLBEING FRAMEWORK OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMISSION’S CITIZENS’ JURIES

We believe in a better life for all. This means a future where everyone:

- has good physical and mental health
- is able to access nourishing food and has the shelter they need
- feels protected from crime, antisocial behaviour and climate threats
- is able to access and enjoy a diversity of natural environments and play a role in protecting nature
- has the ability to move around affordably, efficiently, safely, and sustainably in clean air
- is able to relax, enjoy varied cultural and leisure activities, and be physically active
- is able to meet and enjoy time with friends and family
- has continued access to lifelong learning and has opportunities to develop, create, and pursue interests, and grow spiritually
- has a support network and connection to a close-knit community
- feels like they belong to a place, with community spirit and pride
- is able to do satisfying and purposeful paid and unpaid work that helps others and which offers opportunities for personal growth
- is empowered to make change happen directly and through using their voice in democratic, meaningful and transparent decision-making processes
- is free to express themselves and has choice, control, and independence in their own lives
- feels protected from crime, antisocial behaviour and climate threats
- has the ability to move around affordably, efficiently, safely, and sustainably in clean air
- is able to relax, enjoy varied cultural and leisure activities, and be physically active
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- is able to do satisfying and purposeful paid and unpaid work that helps others and which offers opportunities for personal growth
- is empowered to make change happen directly and through using their voice in democratic, meaningful and transparent decision-making processes
- is free to express themselves and has choice, control, and independence in their own lives
- feels protected from crime, antisocial behaviour and climate threats

Source: IPPR analysis of IPPR 2021a, 2021b, 2021c and 2021d

EMPOWERING THE PUBLIC

WHAT DID OUR JURORS SAY?

All four juries spent significant time talking about how we make decisions on tackling the climate and nature crises.

They were concerned that current approaches are not working and that the wrong things get prioritised. For them, the key implication of this is that progress would be too slow to successfully decarbonise and restore nature.

The juries told us that urgent action is needed and that this needs to cut across traditional local and national governmental siloes and support a shift in business-as-usual practices. Without this kind of coordinated effort, led by government and
involving all parts of society, they concluded that the changes would not go far enough in making it easier for people to live in ways that were compatible with reaching net zero.

The jurors also hope for more than just avoiding the worst outcomes; they see the opportunity to make changes that improve health and wellbeing and make people’s lives easier. They were clear, however, that these benefits will not be achieved by chance, they will need to be central to how all decisions are made.

The jurors were clear that when we talk about investment it is not always about finding new money, it is about the way we choose to spend what we already have. The approach we take should support every pound being spent by publicly funded organisations, from the local school or hospital to national government departments, to be part of our response to the climate and nature crises and contribute to wider social and environmental goals.

Source: IPPR analysis of IPPR 2021a, 2021b, 2021c and 2021d

Our juries told us that being empowered to engage in decision-making and creating change is one of the cornerstones of a good quality of life. People need to feel that they are part of change, that they have a sense of ownership over the actions taken and are committed to what comes next; they want to see that decisions will improve things for them and the people they care about.

“Genuine, meaningful consultation is crucial to ensure that decisions are fair for local people. People should be involved before decisions get taken and kept informed. When people are asked to have their say they must be listened to and not overruled, otherwise trust is lost.”

Aberdeenshire citizens’ jury

At the moment, most people do not feel like they understand how to engage in decisions that affect them. In the year ending March 2020, only just over one-quarter of people (27 per cent) said they felt they could influence decisions affecting their local area (DCMS 2020). Participation in local elections is low, as is trust in politics overall. More than twice as many people say they ‘almost never’ trust governments than trust them ‘most of the time’ (34 per cent compared to 15 per cent, Curtice et al 2020). Our jurors told us that they want to be better informed of opportunities to engage in democratic processes beyond the ballot box, and that they want clearer and more transparent information about the policies and plans that affect them.

We heard that people want decisions to be taken with the community, rather than actions being done to them. Communities understand the assets and opportunities available within their area (Webb et al 2021). They are also united by shared threats from the local impacts of the climate crisis and degradation of nature, and face common challenges of changing local industries as the UK shifts to a low-carbon economy. For example, in Aberdeen the oil and gas industry is a key part of the local economy, employing more than 10 per cent of workers in the region (Emden et al 2020). However, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, in conjunction with a longer-term shift towards renewable energy, has also affected the wider jobs market and local economy (ibid). The challenges, and opportunities, of a transition away from oil and gas are felt by everyone. The whole community therefore has a stake in these decisions.
**Giving people power**

Our proposed social contract for a fair transition, drawn from the insights of our jurors, makes clear that people want and need to be at the heart of decisions that will affect their lives and those of future generations.

The first step is giving people the information they need to understand the climate and nature crises. In 2020, the members of the Climate Assembly UK recommended a set of principles that should underpin the UK’s path to net zero and gave the most support to a principle around education and information sharing (Climate Assembly UK 2020). For our jurors it was often a revelation to see and hear the relationship between their local area and issues that they had only heard about in the abstract or in the context of national or global news stories. If people are to change their behaviour and play a meaningful role in decision-making, the UK needs a better approach to communicating these issues.

“**Awareness of the severity of the issue is essential. There are many people who aren’t aware of the change that is needed. Much of the information we see is about the global situation. We need to hear more about the impact this will have locally and what role people can play in making change happen.**”

South Wales Valleys citizens’ jury

Government must treat the provision of high-quality and accessible public information on the climate and nature crises as seriously as it does public health campaigns. During March to June 2020, the height of the first lockdown, Public Health England spent more on advertising than any other organisation (Sweney 2020) and almost 21 million people have now downloaded the NHS Covid-19 app in England and Wales (Statista 2021). The UK and devolved governments should develop a new public communications plan for the climate and nature crises and the public policy response to them. Success would mean everyone having access to information on national commitments, and the progress made to achieve these, as well as locally relevant information that put both the necessary lifestyle changes and polices into context.

If you walk through the average town centre or high street in the UK, you would not know that a climate emergency has been declared or what action is required to address it. Communities are seeking to address this gap themselves through establishing Climate Emergency Centres in vacant premises that provide space for people to share ideas and resources (Climate Emergency Centre 2021). Local authorities, backed by central and devolved governments, should support ‘one stop shops’ for climate and nature action and provide the resources to make these a key part of the UK’s approach to engaging with the public. Alongside accurate, up to date information on our progress in tackling the climate and nature crises, such centres could give access to the information, advice and financial support that people will need to make the required changes in their lives to address these crises – including information on the GreenGO scheme set out in chapter 5.

“**Children and young people should learn about nature, climate and the changes that they will see in their lifetimes within schools... Young people will be the most affected and they have to feel part of shaping this greener future.**”

Aberdeenshire citizens’ jury
Change is required in our education system. Young people are demanding greater understanding of the challenges they face and the actions they can take to address them (Teach the Future 2021). Schools will need to provide them with the knowledge of the causes of the climate and nature crises and an understanding of its implications for all aspects of their lives. **All governments should include the climate and nature crises as an explicit subject in the core curriculum.** Teachers will need the training and resources to teach about these crises well, with a focus on solutions and with sensitivity to the mental health support required to help younger people with eco-anxiety. A specific subject will allow these issues to be tackled in the detail required but these topics should also be explored across the curriculum, including looking at our relationship with nature through language studies and art. These changes within schools should be supported by more opportunities for children of all ages, particularly those living in nature-deprived areas, to visit a diverse range of nature-rich sites – as the Landscapes Review made clear: “All children should be helped to develop pride in their national landscapes, their environment and its biodiversity” (DEFRA 2019). Young people have been challenging decision-makers to deliver a fair response to the climate and nature crises, and education will be vital in supporting them to be involved in all deliberations on their future.

Engagement with the public must become the norm across all policymaking. There is no one size fits all approach to deliberation and policymakers need guidance to ensure that they are implementing the right approach on the right question in the right place. For deliberative approaches to renew public trust in decision-making and to continue to grow in popularity, they have to be shown to be effective (Liao 2021). **New standards for public engagement and deliberation should be put in place across the UK, based on Scotland’s National Standards for Community Engagement.** These standards provide the public, private and voluntary sectors a clear understanding of what high-quality public engagement looks like and emphasise the need for community engagement to be inclusive, with those who face barriers to participation being supported to take part (SCDC 2021). New UK-wide standards should go further than the existing National Standards in Scotland by embedding a clear set of principles for the use of deliberative processes in-line with emerging best practice – including a clearly defined purpose, a directly accountable decision-maker committed to acting on the conclusions and transparency throughout every stage of the process (Bellantoni et al 2020).

Local communities bring practical knowledge and experience from all walks of life and can provide valuable insights into how policies and plans could play out at a local level. Our citizens’ juries show the value of bringing people from different backgrounds together to learn from one another, share experiences and consider whether the ideas they hear through the process feel fair. The people who have been involved in deliberative events strongly support their use in decision-making and through their involvement gain confidence and desire to engage with other opportunities to shape decisions.8

“The people who are most affected by a decision should be at the core of the decision-making process. This helps mitigate unfair, unintended, consequences.”

South Wales Valleys citizens’ jury

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8 The initial evaluation of Climate Assembly UK, for example, shows that 90% of members ‘strongly agree’ or ‘agree’ that ‘assemblies like this should be used more often to inform government and parliament decision-making’ (Climate Assembly UK 2020). The same evaluation found that 88% of assembly members ‘strongly agreed’ or ‘agreed’ that ‘I feel more confident to engage in political decision-making as a result of being involved in this citizens’ assembly’ and that ‘taking part in this citizens’ assembly has made me want to be more involved in other aspects of decision-making’ (ibid).
No plan for addressing the climate and nature crises should be prepared without public involvement. Climate assemblies and citizens’ juries are becoming established as key tools in a more deliberative and democratic approach to policymaking. So far, in 2021 alone there have been deliberative events focussed on the response to the climate crisis held in Blaenau Gwent, Bristol, Jersey, the London Borough of Lambeth and North of Tyne, and a national assembly in Scotland (Involve 2021). Since 2019, 15 juries and assemblies have been completed, including in Brighton and Hove, Lancaster, and Oxford (ibid). However, one-off events are not enough and should be complemented by a commitment to an ongoing role for the public to assess progress against the recommendations that they are making.

Building on the work of Climate Assembly UK, the government should establish a permanent UK Climate and Nature Assembly with a statutory right of consultation on climate and nature policy. The membership of such a citizens’ assembly would be refreshed regularly and be drawn from all four nations of the UK. Alongside its role in shaping future policy, this assembly would play a vital role in holding the government to account for delivery through support of both the existing Climate Change Committee and the proposed Nature Recovery Committee described in chapter 6. A permanent citizens’ assembly would ensure high standards for deliberation are maintained, avoid duplication and siloed working across government departments and provide an efficient way of engaging the public in the key decisions we identify throughout this report – including the future of fuel duty and road user charging (chapter 5) and the balance between rights and responsibilities for the public in accessing nature (chapter 6). The governments of Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales should mirror this approach.

“There should be citizens’ juries in all local areas informing decision-making.”
Tees Valley and County Durham citizens’ jury

Local and regional governments must ensure a role for the public in both informing climate crisis and nature recovery action plans and in monitoring their progress. The specific approach will differ based on a local understanding of what works in engaging the public in their areas. However, we argue that high-quality, deliberative approaches will play a crucial role in achieving local buy-in and support for change. Establishing a permanent citizens’ assembly at local or regional level would provide an ongoing way of engaging the public in both the response to the climate and nature crises and other key local decisions.

**CASE STUDIES: BRISTOL’S CITIZENS’ ASSEMBLY AND NEWHAM COUNCIL’S CITIZENS’ ASSEMBLY**

Bristol City Council’s assembly on recovering from Covid-19 provided a clear case for bold action on the climate crisis. Their conclusions include the need for financial support for homeowners to make changes to their homes, the ambition to provide better alternatives to cars and action to address health inequalities.

9 This is in line with the recommendation from Climate Assembly UK that an independent body should monitor and ensure progress on net zero and be supported by citizens’ assemblies (this received 89 per cent support from assembly members) (Climate Assembly UK 2020).

10 To provide the appropriate focus and scrutiny we suggest a permanent citizens’ assembly focussed on climate and nature is required alongside the Scottish government’s commitment to deliver annual events on a range of other topics.
Newham has become the first authority in England to establish a permanent citizens' assembly. The topics the assembly engages with will be chosen by residents of the borough, with a group of 50 residents then randomly recruited to hear more about the issue and agree the possible solution. The conclusions are then presented to the council for consideration.

Sources: Bristol Citizens’ Assembly 2021 and Newham Council 2021

Involvement in decision-making should act as a catalyst for the public to take action in their neighbourhoods. In order for the peoples’ dividend we set out in part 3 to be realised, all parts of the UK should replicate Scotland’s commitment of a minimum of one per cent of local funding to be allocated through participatory budgeting. High-quality participatory budgeting gives communities the power to realise their own ambitions, and contributes to tackling poverty through the sharing of opportunities, power and wealth (Scottish Government 2021). It can increase people’s trust in local decision-makers, their sense of belonging to their community, and improve social determinants of health (Pennington et al 2018). Participatory budgeting will support people to play an active role in shaping their communities in line with the ambition for more opportunities to be accessible within 20-minute neighbourhoods and anchor towns, as outline in chapter 6. If such a commitment had been in place in England in 2019/20, then over £940 million would have been allocated in this way (MHCLG 2021a) – representing a shift towards a new, more trusting and two-way relationship between the public and decision-makers. This approach is not just relevant to local authorities; all public bodies should consider how they can embed participatory budgeting in their decision-making, for example by schools creating opportunities to involve parents and pupils within the allocation of their budgets.

“Different voices need to be heard and brought together, and it takes a proactive approach to ensure this happens.”

Tees Valley and County Durham citizens’ jury

Governments at all levels must have a tangible way of ensuring a ‘fairness lock’ on all climate and nature decision-making. The Wellbeing and Future Generations Act (see below), the permanent Climate and Nature Assembly and participative budgeting, are means of ensuring fairness. Beyond these, those currently most exposed to environmental harms – from poor access to green space to high levels of pollution – need their voices amplified in the decisions that affect where they live. The UK’s commitment to the sustainable development goals includes a promise to ‘leave no one behind’ and to deliver on this pledge by “listening and responding to those left furthest behind” making clear that “every country... has a responsibility to empower and address the needs of its most vulnerable citizens” (FCDO 2019). To deliver on this governments should define the most disadvantaged communities and put in place a proactive requirement for them to be supported to participate in decision-making on the response to the climate and nature crises. This will require extra resources to be allocated to engaging with these communities to ensure those most affected by the impacts of these crises and the policy responses put in place to address them have their voice heard in decision-making. As with Massachusetts’ new climate law, this definition

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11 As per recommendations from the evaluation of Scotland’s participatory budgeting programme this target must sit alongside guidance and support for authorities to ensure it delivers the transformation in relationships between people and government that leads to the public becoming genuine partners in decision-making (Hagan et al 2019).

12 This figure represents 1 per cent of total local council service expenditure in England in 2019/20 (which includes local council spending on areas such as education services, highway and transport services and environmental services).
should relate to specific neighbourhoods (Commonwealth of Massachusetts 2021) and should take into considerations such as income, education level, disabilities, race, and gender.

Involving people in the decisions that affect them goes beyond the actions of governments; it should inform the governance of all institutions and companies. Our recommendations for increased public engagement in the financial system and an increased role for workers’ voices are detailed in chapter 4.

**VALUING WHAT MATTERS**

Delivering benefits to people’s lives requires a shared understanding of what success looks like. This requires rethinking our assumptions on what the economy is for and how we measure its success.

GDP growth continues to be used as the primary measure of how well our economy is doing (IPPR Commission on Economic Justice 2018). This is despite widespread acknowledgement that it fails to take into account damage to the environment, fails to measure wellbeing and is no longer linked to earnings. After the financial crisis of 2008, GDP growth did not lead to higher incomes for the majority of the population and average living standards stagnated, even as growth was restored: “a rising tide no longer lifts all boats” (ibid).

Such narrow thinking is not confined to annual Budget statements by the Chancellor of the Exchequer. Indeed, economic appraisal is currently the basis for many government policy decisions. The primary tool used to assess transport projects, for example, prioritises economic considerations such as journey times over emissions: efficiency over the environment (Borrowman et al 2020). Meanwhile, the planning system which should protect the environment and deliver social goods, such as high-quality, affordable housing, instead prioritises housebuilding targets, regardless of the affordability of the homes built, and protecting profits for developers (Murphy 2018).

The failure of this growth-focussed thinking is increasingly recognised. The Welsh and Scottish governments are part of a global movement working towards shaping their economies to deliver “human and ecological wellbeing” (Wellbeing Economy Alliance 2021). Thinking across generations, as is supported by the Wellbeing of Future Generations Act in Wales and within the Future Design movement in Japan, leads to decisions that are better for the environment and are more compatible with long-term wellbeing (Krznaric 2020).

Many different measures of wellbeing and progress have been proposed but among the most consistent internationally recognised standards are the sustainable development goals (SDGs). These 17 goals provide a framework as applicable for shaping global action to end social injustice as in the work of local councils to improve the quality of life for their residents (LGA 2020). Recent assessments of UK performance against the 143 SDG targets showed there is much still to be done in implementing these within domestic policy – with gaps in policy or inadequate performance for 57 per cent of them, and 15 per cent where there is little to no policy in place to address the target, or where performance is poor (UKSSD 2018). The UK government’s approach to embedding these goals within ‘single departmental plans’ is a welcome step but is not up to the task of driving progress across interlinked policy areas.
**CASE STUDY: M4 RELIEF ROAD**

The proposal for the M4 relief road, a 13-mile motorway around Newport, was scrapped by the Welsh government over environmental concerns that meant it was incompatible with the Wellbeing of Future Generations legislation. The road, which would have cut into the biodiversity-rich Gwent Wetlands, would not have aligned with Wales’ carbon reduction targets and did not further the act’s goals of supporting the resilience of ecosystems and a healthier Wales.

Source: Future Generations Commissioner for Wales 2019

**Changing how we measure success**

*“Decisions should prioritise wellbeing and nature over profit.”*  
Thurrock citizens’ jury

Our citizens’ juries told us what they believed it means to lead a good life where they live. They prioritised wellbeing goals such as health, security, connection to others, access to nature and feeling in control of their own lives. They pointed towards a new set of objectives and conditions by which to measure success. Meeting their expectations will require leadership from all parts of society, focussed first on addressing the climate and nature crises with the urgency it requires.

*“This is now the time for action. We are used to policy and plans taking a long time to come to fruition. For us to have hope we need to see faster action on these emergencies.”*  
South Wales Valleys citizens’ jury

**FIGURE 3.1: THE GOVERNMENT IS NOT ON TRACK TO MEET ITS 5TH CARBON BUDGET, LET ALONE THE STRICTER 6TH CARBON BUDGET**

Predictions of current emissions reduction trajectory compared to pathways for the 5th and 6th carbon budgets

Source: CCC 2020a (adapted by IPPR)
While the UK has made progress reducing emissions, we are not on track to meet the fifth carbon budget pathway, let alone the stricter sixth carbon budget pathway (figure 3.1). The UK’s record on nature is even poorer – the UK has been described as one of the “most nature-depleted countries in the world” and its level of consumption disproportionately impacts the global environment, including through water and nitrogen use, deforestation, and its overall ecological footprint (figure 3.2). If everyone consumed the same amount per person as the UK, we would need 2.5 Earths to sustain ourselves (IPPR 2020).

**FIGURE 3.2: THE UK EXCEEDS ALMOST EVERY PLANETARY BOUNDARY BENEATH WHICH THE WORLD CAN OPERATE SAFELY**

Factor by which the UK exceeds seven key planetary boundaries (as at 2018)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nitrogen (kg per year)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO₂ Emissions (tCO₂ per year)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phosphorus (kg per year)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
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<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Material footprint (tonnes per year)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ecological footprint (global hectares per year)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land-use intensity (tonnes of carbon per year)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Water (cm³ of water per year)</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: University of Leeds 2021 (adapted by IPPR)
Note: Over 1 = exceeded planetary boundary.

“Decisions should aim to create a better tomorrow for those after us.”
South Wales Valleys citizens’ jury

The UK needs a fundamental rethink of the priorities that govern the decision-making frameworks of our governments and institutions. If progress is to be measured by the quality of life and wellbeing of all people and the health of our natural world, then we need to end our reliance on economic growth as a proxy for success. People want to see policies that raise hope for the future, particularly for young people (Webb et al 2021).

“It gives me hope to know that my generation (I’m 17 years old) is being considered and thought about when thinking of ways to improve where we live, and are actively given a voice when changes are being made.”
Juror from the South Wales Valleys citizens’ jury

The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 is a model for how to bring consideration of the aims of the sustainable development goals

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13 Five yearly emissions caps which the UK must stay within to meet our 2050 net zero target.
into a wider range of public decision-making. Scotland has also made progress in this area through embedding wellbeing within its National Performance Framework, and, together with Wales, is part of the Wellbeing Economy Governments partnership. The UK, Northern Ireland, and Scotland governments should introduce their own Wellbeing of Future Generations Act and establish their own Wellbeing of Future Generations Commissioner or Commission. These acts would provide the legal basis for embedding the principles of the sustainable development goals into decision-making across all nations and tiers of government as well as ensuring appropriate resources are put in place for their independent scrutiny and advocacy. The acts would include clear measures of success for all public policy that focus on wellbeing and fairness, not just economic growth.

A fair transition starts with ensuring that nature is put on equal footing with net zero. The UK government should define and adopt the environmental limits within which the economy must operate and provide statutory targets across a full range of environmental impacts. Modelled on the UK’s target of reaching net zero by 2050 and the recently announced 2030 target for reversing wildlife decline (DEFRA 2021) these legally binding targets would support the conservation and restoration of all natural systems, including ecological resilience, soil fertility and air quality. As we discuss in chapter 7, these budgets should also include a target to halve the UK’s global environmental impact by 2030. The Nature Recovery Committee (see chapter 6) would oversee these targets, providing advice and budgets modelling how to achieve them, and the Office of Environmental Protection should be provided with the powers to enforce them and hold the government to account for breaches. These targets could be incorporated within the proposed Wellbeing of Future Generations Act or the government’s environment bill.

Through this wider account of our environmental impact, we should also address the gaps in our approach to reducing the UK’s carbon emissions. Current legal targets do not include emissions from goods consumed in the UK but produced overseas, even though these consumption emissions are 50 per cent higher than our ‘territorial’ emissions (CCC 2020a) and have not declined anywhere near as steeply (IPPR 2020). A new target for consumption emissions should be introduced with the Climate Change Committee asked to advise on the best means of doing so for the UK as a whole and across the devolved nations.

“harm should be prevented rather than offset”

Decisions should have a positive outcome for climate and nature, or at least do no harm. Our jurors were clear that harm should be prevented rather than offset, wherever possible. To ensure this, the UK, devolved and local governments should adopt a new ‘net zero and protection of nature rule’ and embed this within all decisions on spending and investment. Within central government, such a rule would apply to the Budget and Comprehensive Spending Reviews. It would also strengthen existing

14 The act requires public bodies in Wales to account for the long-term impact of decisions, to work better with people, communities, and each other, and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change (Future Generations Commissioner for Wales 2021).
15 Which currently includes Scotland, New Zealand, Iceland, Wales and Finland. It was founded in recognition that ‘development’ entails delivering human and ecological wellbeing (Wellbeing Economy Alliance 2021).
16 WWF UK outlined the design of a ‘net zero test’ within their response to the Comprehensive Spending Review (WWF 2020a) with the same principles being equally relevant to the protection of nature.
guidance on assessing greenhouse gas emissions within the Green Book by ensuring all spending decisions, across all government departments, contribute to meeting legally-binding environmental targets. Such a rule will ensure that all projects, policies, investment and spending, taxation measures, regulations and legislation are in line with the above obligations as well as broader environmental commitments that will be enshrined in the government’s environment bill.

The scale of change required will go far beyond government action and the public sector. Businesses, and the way they are governed and the basis upon which they make decisions, will also need to adapt. Increasing numbers are already signing up to initiatives that lock in their commitment to “balancing profit and purpose” in a way that will deliver “positive impact for their employees, communities and the environment” (B Lab 2021). To meet the expectations of the public, companies should change their governance structures to include new objectives and an approach to decision-making and monitoring performance that is in line with wider societal goals, including increasing wellbeing and addressing the climate and nature crises. The UK government should also consider amending the duties of company directors to make this a legal requirement.17

EMPOWERING LOCAL LEADERSHIP AND COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP

WHAT DID OUR JURORS SAY?

Jurors frequently reflected on the need for an accountable Westminster and devolved governments to work hand in hand with local governments.

Among the biggest concerns was that new priorities and responsibilities could be passed to local councils without the expertise and funding to be able to act on them. There was also a sense that although many councils, and their councillors, may be committed to supporting nature and taking climate action, all authorities will need to play their part.

Our jurors were excited by stories of community groups that are taking action in local areas through renewable energy projects, restoring woodland or making better use of disused land in the city. They saw this as a sign of what was possible if more power and opportunity were given to people to develop local solutions that meet the needs of their area and inspire others to take part.

The scale of the crises will require action from governments at every level, from national, to regional to local. It was clear to our jurors that trying to lead this effort solely from Westminster would not be effective or address the underlying challenges that communities face in different parts of the UK. The impacts of these crises will vary across the country, and as we discuss in part 3, the opportunities that come from acting will differ too. A new approach to sharing power that provides people and places with the ability to take action locally must be adopted if we are to ensure that all places can benefit from the shift to net zero and the restoration of nature.

17 A similar proposal was made by the IPPR Commission on Economic Justice (2018).
FIGURE 3.3: MANY NET ZERO TARGET YEARS ARE FAR MORE AMBITIOUS THAN THE NATIONAL 2050 TARGET

Net zero targets as set by local authorities

FIGURE 3.4 SOME OF THE MOST CARBON INTENSIVE AREAS ARE NOT COVERED BY A DEVOLUTION DEAL

Emissions by region and local authority, including industrial areas in North Lincolnshire and East Yorkshire, as well as areas of the North West outside the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and Liverpool City Region areas, such as Cheshire West and Chester (as of July 2021).


Already, over 75 per cent of English councils have now declared climate emergencies. Many local authorities have set net zero targets that are far more ambitious than those offered by central government (see figure 3.3). For example, Newcastle City Council’s The Net Zero Newcastle: 2030 Action Plan presents a view of how the city can achieve its ambition to be carbon neutral within the next decade, 20 years ahead of the UK government’s targets (Newcastle City Council 2020).

However, such ambition is hampered across England by a deficit of powers, resources and skills to take action (Borrowman et al 2020), and some of the most carbon intensive areas are not covered by a devolution deal. This includes
industrial areas in North Lincolnshire and East Yorkshire, as well as areas of the North West outside the Greater Manchester Combined Authority and Liverpool City Region areas, such as Cheshire West and Chester (figure 3.4).

Due to their responsibilities for areas such as housing and transport, local authorities have powers or influence over only one-third of emissions in their local areas (Evans 2020), however, this can vary a lot between authorities. Supporting them to reduce those emissions is crucial if the UK is to reach net zero. At the same time, providing them with the resources to lead the delivery of locally designed plans, rather than attempting to implement changes nationally, makes for more effective policy, not least because they “understand their local communities, environments and businesses” (Borrowman et al 2020).

**CASE STUDY: THE DIFFERENCE A DEVOLUTION DEAL CAN MAKE**

Combined authorities’ powers vary greatly depending on the local devolution deal.

Greater Manchester Combined Authority has used its limited transport powers to make impressive progress in developing a local transport system that takes a region-wide approach, reflects how people live and work and gives people a range of options beyond the private car, thereby reducing carbon emissions and increasing fairness (Sustrans 2020). In Tees Valley, 90 per cent of the working population have jobs within the combined authority area and 65,000 cross a council boundary to work (TVCA 2021). However, it has been unable to tailor a transport system to this population as it does not have power over the local roads network or established joint working with Highways England (Webb et al 2021).

People are also far more likely to engage in action to tackle the climate crisis if it is framed as an opportunity to improve their local area and boost their local economy (Twigger-Ross et al 2015). Community participation has been shown to increase the speed of action, build momentum and mobilise more people to get involved. Where it shows tangible and immediate benefits, community projects inspire people to do more and further enhance the community’s capacities and capabilities (Webb et al 2021). This capability building also increases a community’s resilience by making it better able to cope with future shocks such as adverse weather and flooding and the impacts of global warming experienced at a local level. For example, responses to events such as flooding are more effective when community flood planning integrates local knowledge with support from local government (McEwen and Jones 2012, McEwen et al 2018).

Despite lacking powers in some areas, local government nevertheless has a significant role to play in stimulating local community action. For example, they can designate the use of the land and buildings they own for green projects, provide planning support for community-run developments and priority bidding for community groups for land or buildings, and proactively communicate information on community rights, funding opportunities, resources, and support networks (Webb et al 2021).
CASE STUDY: AMBITION LAWRENCE WESTON

In Lawrence Weston, north west Bristol, 70 per cent of residents say that they struggle to pay heating and electricity bills. In response, community-led Ambition Lawrence Weston have developed a solar energy farm at the edge of the Lawrence Weston estate, the income from which supports them to achieve their wider objectives of alleviating poverty and making the area an even better place to live. Following this success, they are now seeking to build a 4.5MW, 150-metre-high onshore wind turbine which would generate enough electricity to power 3,850 homes and bring in an income for the community of between £50,000 and £400,000 a year, depending on borrowing costs, in addition to saving 1,965 tonnes of CO₂ per year.

Source: Webb et al 2021

SUPPORTING LOCAL ACTION

“We need some top-down leadership on climate and nature... This should involve long-term target-setting and these targets should then be used to monitor the progress made by government and businesses, allowing them to be held accountable if targets are not achieved.”

Aberdeenshire citizens’ jury

The UK and devolved governments have a powerful role to play in coordinating action across the nations. As recognised by the CCC: “Some national coordination and a framework for local delivery of the UK net zero target is required that allows for flexibility in how emissions reductions are delivered at a local level, while recognising that some decisions might benefit from co-ordinated scale” (Evans 2020). Working closely with local leaders, the UK and devolved governments should agree frameworks for developing action plans at a local level, including an agreed central methodology to monitor and report on emissions, as recommended by the Green Alliance (Borrowman et al 2020). This coordination should extend to providing toolkits and guidance. Such plans could be coordinated by the Net Zero and Fair Transition Delivery body recommended in Part 3.

Alongside this, government will need to make collaboration on decarbonisation much easier. As Green Alliance have called for, there should be a single point of contact within UK government focussed on local authority decarbonisation (Borrowman et al 2020). This could be a joint unit of the Department for Business, Enterprise and Industrial Strategy and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. This will make it far easier for local authorities who are currently required “to engage with multiple central policymakers, initiatives and funding pots with different objectives, distributed across government” (ibid).

“More decisions should be made at a local level and the uniqueness of each place should be recognised in the decision-making.”

South Wales Valleys citizens’ jury

The UK is one of the most centralised nations in the developed world despite significant evidence that more devolved economies deliver better outcomes (Johns et al 2020). The benefits of devolution extend well beyond the realm of climate and nature. The evidence suggests that devolution can deliver better decision-making, greater accountability, and improved integration and coordination across policy areas (Sow and Razafimahefa 2015; Johns et al 2020).

18 A similar approach should be followed in the devolved nations.
### TABLE 3.1: EXPANDING POWERS OF ELECTED MAYORS, COMBINED AUTHORITIES AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT COULD DELIVER FURTHER ACTION ON CLIMATE AND NATURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy area</th>
<th>Applied tiers</th>
<th>Benefits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Industrial strategy – the UK government’s Plan for Growth</strong></td>
<td>Greater London Authority, combined authorities, and local authorities</td>
<td>Gives local leaders more power to align existing powers to shape skills with future economic development. Would be able to use existing power over skills, training, and apprenticeship funding to support initiatives such as housing retrofit or training in future low-carbon industries. Can attract significant investment for businesses and industries to develop new low-carbon technologies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Public procurement and carbon budgeting</strong></td>
<td>Greater London Authority, combined authorities, local authorities</td>
<td>New public procurement policies can ensure that major infrastructure projects and public services are delivered through the sourcing of low-carbon goods and services. Assigning carbon budgets that sit under a national carbon budget will allow local areas to at the very least meet the minimum expectations on cutting emissions while power to set more ambitious targets will allow many authorities to go faster and further in their drive to net zero.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stewardship of natural assets</strong></td>
<td>Combined authorities and local authorities</td>
<td>Provision of enhanced powers to safeguard and regulate future planning and development to ensure that England’s natural assets are preserved and recognised as a crucial tool tackling the climate and nature crisis while also improving public health outcomes. This will need to be carried out in partnership with other agencies including Natural England.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fiscal devolution</strong></td>
<td>Greater London Authority, combined authorities and local authorities</td>
<td>Would provide devolved authorities to use local taxation and budget powers to incentives decarbonisation. This could include: - reforms of council tax that include property energy efficiency in the taxation process - setting congestion charges - budgets that match areas of devolved responsibility to avoid situation where leaders have the authority to act but lack the budgets to make a difference.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Transport</strong></td>
<td>Combined authorities and local authorities (powers already enjoyed by Mayor of London and other areas to a certain extent)</td>
<td>Devolved transport powers and funding to local transport bodies, while ensuring region wide bodies like Transport for the North have powers to shape inter-regional connectivity between major areas. This would allow public bodies to control transport, including buses, and design new and improved low-carbon transport plans.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spatial planning</strong></td>
<td>Mayor of London, Combined authorities and local authorities</td>
<td>Giving leaders new powers to not just improve the supply of genuinely affordable homes in their area but also ensure that future developments commit to developing existing natural assets and promoting low-carbon transport solutions would help deliver more environmentally and socially just housing outcomes than those offered by England’s overly centralised and develop-led planning system.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Authors’ analysis*
With active government support, every nation and region across the UK can benefit from, and contribute to, a fair transition. While this will require setting out a national delivery plan with national funding, as mentioned above, many activities to decarbonise the economy and restore nature will require local delivery. In recognition of their significant convening powers, both within and outside political structures, and their ability to stimulate community action, all local areas should be offered the powers and resources to play their part in achieving net zero and support nature to recover as part of a new devolution framework. This should include powers over economic strategy, public services (such as skills and welfare), taxation, transport, and spatial planning. Table 3.1 identifies the policy areas where powers could be devolved to support regional and local action.

However, devolution must go beyond just empowering combined and local authorities; it must also share power and resources with communities directly.

“Priority should be placed on encouraging community, cooperative, and worker ownership, as part of all projects. These might include community or cooperative energy projects.”

Tees Valley and County Durham citizens’ jury

The UK government should set a target to significantly increase the proportion of community-owned low-carbon assets. As part of this, one-third of all onshore renewables in England, such as wind turbines and solar panels, should be under community ownership by 2030. To support this the government should learn from Denmark’s 2009 ‘Promotion of Renewable Energy Act’ (IEA 2014) that enshrined a ‘right to invest’ to support local citizens’ to take at least a 20 per cent stake in all onshore windfarms. Similar targets should be put in place to support increases in the community ownership of land for tree planting and agriculture, renewable heating sources, housing, and local transport. Scotland’s Community Empowerment (Scotland) Act 2015 could provide an appropriate starting point for a new legislative framework that gives communities the powers to take ownership of a wide range of local assets. Workers in community-owned businesses require high-quality working conditions and decent pay, to ensure this such schemes should adopt the fair work standards set out in chapter 4 in consultation with trade unions.

“The action [local and national government] take must be inclusive and responsive to the needs of local communities.”

Thurrock citizens’ jury

As others have argued, empowering communities should involve legislating for their rights, giving communities the right to organise and have their decisions respected (Kaye 2020, Webb et al 2021). New community rights legislation should be introduced by the UK government and include a new Community Right to Own or Manage. This would extend the existing Community Right to Bid, within the Localism Act, to cover a larger definition of community value and support communities to buy or lease unused or underused local assets from both the public sector and private investors.

“Approaches to funding needs to harness community spirit and use the strong networks and cohesion already present. This could also have a positive impact on wellbeing, increasing community connection.”

South Wales Valleys citizens’ jury

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19 The framework for devolved powers and the funding settlements required to support this is defined by IPPR in Forging the future (Webb 2021).
Communities need more resources to lead the response to the climate and nature crises in their areas and take a greater stake in their local economies. Government-led funding designed to ‘level up’ areas of England has been challenged for allocating investment unfairly (Bounds and Parker 2021) and do nothing to put power in the hands of the public. The approach taken to providing resources to communities should learn from the work of independent endowments such as Big Local and Power to Change. The UK government should create a single new, independent and permanent Thriving Places Fund that is endowed by the government, and the National Lottery, with at least £1.5 billion over the next three years. This fund would be devolved and distributed locally. The fund would provide support, grants and loans that encourage ambitious responses to the climate and nature crises, create local jobs in the zero-carbon economy and make it possible for more people to live locally to the things they need (a key part of changing how we travel, detailed in chapter 5). The fund would also support our proposed community right to own and manage. The fund should seek to increase the investment available by attracting support of private investors as well as providing opportunities for members of the public to invest in bonds linked to climate action.

Our proposal sits between the amounts allocated to Big Local and Power to Change (£150 million) and the proposal for up to £5 billion for a Community Wealth Fund argued for by the Alliance for a Community Wealth Fund Alliance (Local Trust 2018). Such a fund could be provided with further funding after three years, linked to its ability to raise additional funds from the public as well as commercial and philanthropic investors.