

Climate emergency

CLÉS calls on the next government to...

It is now clearer than ever that our economic model has led the planet to the brink of destruction. Climate emergency demands a fundamental transformation through a national and local Green New Deal.

Our current economic model does not fit within planetary limits.

Inequality is hardwired into the climate emergency, with just 100 companies responsible for 71% of global emissions¹⁰ and the richest 10% of people responsible for half of the world's carbon emissions¹¹.

Whilst the scale of the climate emergency demands that much work will need to take place on a national and even global level, it is imperative that we also develop the role that local and regional government plays.

As we decarbonise, we must also devolve and democratise.

Replace GDP with measures of wellbeing, sustainability and carbon reduction

Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is no longer fit for purpose as the defining measure of an economy's success. The pursuit of growth at all costs has deprioritised the health of both people and the planet.

As an alternative, the UK should follow the lead of nations such as New Zealand, which has replaced GDP with wellbeing and happiness metrics. We suggest that the next UK government develops a new framework for measuring national economic progress based on three key measures: the wellbeing of the population; the sustainability of the nation's ecological and environmental systems; and the extent to which we have removed carbon from our energy consumption patterns.



Enact a local Green New Deal for every place

As of October 2019, 64% of district, county, unitary and metropolitan councils in the UK had declared a climate emergency¹². In policy terms every single local authority needs to pass a local Green New Deal. As a subsidiary of the national Green New Deal movement, the local Green New Deal will spell out how each place will need to respond to this challenge by 2030, including how they are to contribute through local industrial strategies, planning, regeneration and the role of anchor institutions.

CLES endorses the calls for the next UK government to enact a Green New Deal, and also recommends that all local and combined authorities are statutorily mandated to develop their own local Green New Deal within one year of a national Green New Deal coming into law.



Create a national just transition fund

As the UK (and global) economies transition away from extractive fossil capitalism towards a sustainable and democratic model, we need to ensure that no one loses out.

To achieve this we need a national just transition fund, allocated by national government to each region, to help make the economic transformation required. This includes re-skilling and re-deploying workers involved in fossil fuel based industries. As part of the local Green New Deal, each locality should be given devolution powers, to help make the transition.

A UK future generations act

Learning from Wales, the UK should pass a future generations act, which will require all public bodies to operate in the pursuit the economic, social, environmental, and cultural wellbeing of current and future generations, and to report on relevant actions. This would be backed up by regional future generation commissioners, who would act to advise and assist.