

Plan for well paid green jobs in every UK constituency

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My Green New Deal colleague Colin Hines had the following blog on the [TUC Touchstone blog yesterday](#), and I share it here because of the emphasis it gives to an important element of this whole plan - which is that it is about creating jobs across the whole of the UK. Other plans just don't do that:

The Green New Deal group today published [A National Plan for the UK — From Austerity to the Age of the Green New Deal \[PDF\]](#) calling for a £50 billion a year green infrastructure programme. The plan includes making every building in the country energy efficient, and building hundreds of thousands of new, affordable and energy-efficient homes. It wants the repair, maintenance and improvement of the nation's public transport system, and for recycling, reuse and minimisation of waste to become a priority in every part of the UK.

This huge programme will provide a massive boost in economic activity, but in a way which provides jobs on a living wage in every community in the UK, whilst reducing our environmental impact. It will be funded by ensuring that a substantial part of the £95 billion a year lost to tax dodging is recouped by government. This will require effective regulation and ensuring that enough tax inspectors are employed to maximise collection.

The rest of the money can be electronically printed in the form of Green Quantitative Easing (Green QE) by the Bank of England and invested directly into the Green New Deal. So far the £375 billion of QE (around £6000 for every man, woman and child in the UK) has been used to buy government debt i.e. gilts from financial institutions, in the forlorn hope that they will lend these funds to get the economy moving again. Unsurprisingly, the result has been little support for the real economy. Instead the money has been used to pile into the stock market, the bond, commodities and housing market and in the process contributed to a further threat of asset price bubbles.

Green QE by comparison would be used to fund carefully-costed, and therefore non-inflationary, green infrastructure projects that would result in jobs and business opportunities right across the country, and transform the nation's outdated

infrastructure to meet the needs of the future. The report also proposes that Green QE is used to buy out the private finance initiative (PFI) debt and redirect some of the otherwise huge repayments into funding green infrastructure. These savings could also be used to help fund the equally important social infrastructure of education, health, care etc, at present under threat from the austerity policies and the onerous repayments of PFI.

Once the economy has begun to improve, then pension funds can move into longer term investments in areas like energy efficiency and building new low-carbon homes. These will earn a constant income stream and provide secure returns for pensioners. The work generated will also provide much needed intergenerational solidarity.

The major gain from such a nationwide Green New Deal will be to create jobs, business and investment opportunities in every city, town, village and hamlet in the UK. This is why it makes political sense for trades unionists to lobby hard for this programme to become central to the party manifestos in the run up to the next election. It is hard to imagine any voter not wanting to support such a programme, since the tax it would generate would reduce the national debt, the well paid jobs created would reduce the need for welfare benefits and an approach would be in place to help revitalise and transform local economies. This would also provide a national plan that would improve the living standard of virtually all trades unionists in the country.

Colin Hines is Convenor of the Green New Deal group.