

# It's Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland that can deli...

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I have written rather a lot about the Green New Deal, and the standard response of commentators is "so what, you're not going to get one". It's time to end this group think.

I will be candid: I think it unlikely that any of the Conservatives, Labour, LibDems or UKIP will offer a Green New Deal in their manifestos for May. But then, they wouldn't, would they? There are three reasons for saying that.

Firstly these are establishment parties, all with strong links to the City of London. The City does not want the Green New Deal and as a result these parties won't supply it.

Second, these parties are all, unfortunately, wedded to an austerity agenda. [The Green New Deal, financed by Green quantitative easing](#), is part of an anti-austerity agenda. Most with current influence in the parties I mention do not seem to understand that.

And third, these parties are London-centric at their core, and London at this moment and comparatively feels good about the economy. This contrasts with the view in most of the UK which the Green New Deal reflects which is about the need to create jobs in every constituency in the country.

Now I know there are those, especially in Labour, who will resent this characterisation and who will be affronted by it. I understand that, and have sympathy. Unfortunately for them their party is not listening to their views. If it was it would be way ahead in the polls.

As it is, it is not a long way ahead. And also, at least partly as a result, many more people are now aware that these four English dominated parties are not the only parties in the forthcoming election. In Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland there are real alternatives in the SNP, Plaid Cymru and some of the Northern Ireland parties. In England there are the Greens. And it looks likely that all these parties will be represented in parliament after May 7. I am not going to suggest how many seats they will have; only the reckless would do that. But, what is entirely possible is that parties from Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland plus the Greens will hold the balance of

power in the UK. Between them it is quite possible that they will be able to dictate the terms on which the UK is governed.

I am not suggesting that these parties will all agree with each other on what their terms will be. In fact, that is clearly not the case, and some will also be on the some ballot papers on May 7. But the point is that the Greens, SNP and Plaid Cymru have already agreed that they have an anti-austerity agenda in common. This creates a lot of common ground, and what I would hope might be the basis for a common demand for what might be, if not the Green New Deal, then at least an Infrastructure Deal.

What would that be? It would be a demand that the government capitalise investment in the economy by buying bonds issued by regionally controlled investment banks in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the English regions. Those investment banks would then work with regional governments, local authorities, housing associations, NHS trusts and others to deliver the infrastructure this country needs. This whole process is, of course, what Green Quantitative Easing is about, and because new money quite literally created out of nothing is used no repayment of the funding is required, just as no repayment of the £375 billion used to reflate banks will ever be made.

Part of that would be green green energy driven, I am sure. Part would be straight need: much of that would be housing. All would be local. And without exception it would create jobs in every constituency in the UK.

This could be the economic stimulus Scotland needs on top of its new borrowing powers.

This could be the alternative to a policy of disastrous corporation tax cuts for Northern Ireland.

This would empower the Welsh government in ways so far not granted to them.

That would be true of the English regions as well.

But as importantly, to collectively present this policy would be to say that voting for these parties would be about effecting real change.

And it would be about saying that democracy could work.

And it could say that in combination these parties could deliver the anti-austerity agenda the UK needs without ever having to go into coalition with each other.

And that could encourage people to think that voting for these parties is a positive act (which they probably already do in some parts at least of Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland already, but not necessarily in much of England) when the main three parties and UKIP would dearly like it to be thought otherwise.

I stress: I recognise all the differences these parties have and respect them. But this is

the time when they could, by agreeing on this agenda, put forward a combined platform for change for the UK as a whole that would be radical, anti-austerity, affordable, deliverable and local.

It would be great to think there might be takers for such an approach.