Funding the Future

Research shows the Lucas / Lewis Green New Deal Bill is…

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I'm pleased to share the following from the [University of Bournemouth]. As a member of the [Green New Deal Group I worked on the Decarbonisation and Economic Strategy Bill] tabled by Caroline Lucas and Clive Lewis to which the research refers:

Researchers have evaluated and ranked policies and manifesto pledges for their effectiveness in tackling climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution levels.

To date, little quantitative evidence exists to compare different solutions in addressing environmental threats.

The team created models to integrate different disciplines, concepts and solutions to address a range of environmental issues - evaluating their effectiveness in limiting climate change, reducing biodiversity loss, reducing pollution and therefore addressing overall environmental breakdown.

They found that two different solutions emerged from the models:

* Comprehensive 'Green New Deal' scenarios, which create green jobs, while removing fossil fuel subsidies, increasing taxation on polluting products, and reducing intensive food production.

* Nature-based solutions, which involve creating new habitats, such as forests, as well as improving management of existing areas.

The research was undertaken by Bournemouth University, Cardiff University, University College London and the British Ecological Society.

Lead author, Professor Rick Stafford of Bournemouth University, said: "These two approaches are complementary, where the most effective solution uses both nature-based solutions and big economic changes, such as green taxation.

"However, pursuit of economic growth makes strategies such as nature-based solutions much less effective. Solely focussing on 'green growth' is also an ineffective strategy,

unless combined with more comprehensive reforms."

The team have used the models to predict which political party's manifesto pledges would be most effective.

Labour's 'Green Industrial Revolution' covers much of the necessary societal changes for addressing environmental concerns, including reform of agriculture and some commitment to establishing nature-based solutions - the prediction is this is the most comprehensive strategy of the main three parties.

The Liberal Democrat manifesto is almost the mirror image, with stronger commitments to protecting and restoring the natural environment, but weaker societal reforms - the models predict this is the second best set of policies.

The Conservative manifesto website indicates they would "prioritise the environment […] investing in the infrastructure, science and research that will deliver economic growth", a strategy shown to be ineffective, although there was also support for renewables in the full manifesto.

Tree planting and peatland restoration are also mentioned, but not on the scale committed to by the Liberal Democrats — out of the main three parties, this is the weakest set of policies.

However, it is one of the smaller parties which provide the most comprehensive solutions; the Green Party Manifesto covers 'Green New Deal' principles, committing to nature-based solutions and refocussing economic performance away from measurement of growth — these measures are predicted to outperform all of the big three parties in terms of environmental protection.

Co-author Elli Rivers, a PhD student at Bournemouth University, added: "The Green Party manifesto pledges were put to the commons in March 2019 in the Decarbonisation and Economic Strategy Bill. So a good question to ask your prospective MPs would be whether they would support this bill's progress if it was reintroduced in the next parliament. If they would, that could be a good way to vote."

The work will be presented at the British Ecological Society's Annual Meeting in Belfast on the 11th December, a day before the general election.