

Funding the Future

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Amongst the many hats that I wear, I am company secretary to the Green New Deal Group Limited that is now funded by the Marmot Trust and which provides secretarial support to the Green New Deal APPG in parliament. My colleague Colin Hines wrote this report on the APPG's latest report:

In the autumn of 2022, when the *Green New Deal All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG)* launched its *Local Edge* Inquiry, there was little sign of a coherent recovery programme to tackle a climate crisis, a cost of living crisis, an energy crisis and a crisis of governance itself. To offer some answers to this, the APPG set out to explore and showcase local leadership and to identify barriers to change at the national level.

The research was structured to answer one overarching question, which was how can the UK meet its commitment to cut carbon emissions by 68% below 1990 levels by 2030?

The **resulting report was researched and written by the former Labour MP Alan Simpson and was based on a series of evidence sessions, including with academics, energy experts and devolved mayors. It emphasised the fact that the government has set bolder carbon reduction targets for 2035 and 2050, but meeting its 2030 target is what presents the most immediate challenge. Delivering this scale of carbon reduction within the decade needs more than just a review of national policies: it requires a rethink of the role localities must play as the leading edge in tomorrow's climate (and economic) recovery programme.**

The report links climate aspiration and constitutional obligation, offering a joined-up response to today's most urgent crises. It also makes clear that any framework the UK adopts will have to include the 'hidden' carbon footprint of aviation, shipping, imports (and the export of waste) which are currently not accounted for in government calculations. Moreover, it will have to factor in the disruptive impacts of 'wild weather' events and international conflicts on

decentralised supply systems.

Much of the evidence presented to the Inquiry addressed the role localities can play in the delivery of reduced food and product miles, lowering energy bills and delivering low-carbon lifestyles. These are essential parts of a fresh approach to carbon budgeting. They also highlight the skill-sets the UK will need to invest in for tomorrow's low-carbon economics.

The report outlines constructive choices that would address the shift that's required. In particular, it identifies how changes to national legislation can unleash the potential of local initiatives, enabling them to scale up and flourish. It makes clear that in reality, nothing less will get the UK through the upheavals that lie ahead.

Caroline Lucas, the Green MP who co-chairs the group, said: "We know that every home can be its own power station. But now we need national government to power up communities with the finance, resources and regulatory frameworks to help them scale up and thrive."

The other APPG co-chair, the Labour MP Clive Lewis, said: "The greenest shoots of the economic transition demanded by the climate emergency are found in the transformatory and locally led initiatives we see up and down the UK.

"Central government needs to step up and let local people lead, by equitably distributing resources and decentralising decision-making power."