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1. Editorial: A future which doesn't cost the earth

The UK government must issue firmer, more ambitious decarbonisation policies as a “*matter of urgency*” if it is to meet its legally binding carbon reduction targets <http://bit.ly/2DkNFST>. So says the Committee on Climate Change (CCC) <https://www.theccc.org.uk/> the government's independent climate watchdog, in its formal response to last November's *Clean Growth Strategy*.

You suffer that groundhog day feeling on reading the CCC's criticisms:

- Actual plans still needed to phase out petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2040.
- More action to increase the energy efficiency of our homes by 2035.
- Generate 85% of the UK's electricity from low-carbon sources by 2032.
- Boost industrial energy efficiency by 2030.
- Deploy carbon capture and storage technology for heavy industries like steel and cement.

And, we would add: the lack of a skills framework capable of producing a ‘cleaner, greener Britain.’ Gordon Marsden MP, Labour Shadow Minister for Skills, led a debate at our AGM this January centred around how we take forward Labour's proposal for a National Education Service.

As we report here, the twin impacts of austerity and the sale of the UK's Green Investment Bank have collapsed renewable energy investment in the UK, down by 56% last year. In a little noticed aside in last November's Budget, the Chancellor announced there will be “no new low carbon electricity levies until 2025.”

The wider issue of corporate social responsibility is also at play here. As the CCC's chair pointed out this week, “If Persimmon had spent the **£110m bonus it has given to its chief executive** on the 18,000 houses it built last year, it could have saved very significantly the energy bills of everybody who bought a house and contributed significantly to emissions reduction.”

But fortunately there are alternatives. On March 10th the Campaign against Climate Change Trade Union Group steps into this policy black hole with its latest national conference, **Planning for a future which doesn't cost the earth**, opened by the Shadow Chancellor John McDonnell. He joins a great line up of speakers and workshops challenging the false choice of good jobs versus the environment. We need both, the CACC argues. There's an “urgent need for action on climate change and a real opportunity for trade unionists to be at the forefront of campaigning for a transition.”

The GJA will be there in support, with workshops on the government's industrial strategy and green reps.

2. Shadow Skills Minister at GJA AGM



Our AGM took place on January 15th, 2018 at UCU Head Office, London, supported again by our founding partners, including trade unions, Greenpeace, the NUS, FoE and People and Planet. Gordon Marsden MP, Labour Shadow Minister for Skills, led a debate centred around how we take forward Labour's proposal for a National Education Service. The lack of a skills framework capable of producing a 'cleaner, greener Britain,' announced by Teresa May, is a major barrier to future progress, he said.

This was coupled with an energy policy that has undermined the renewable industry and produced the 'Green Deal' fiasco. Gordon called for "fracking to be abandoned" and referenced the GJA submission to the government's Clean Growth Strategy, which set out a range of demands, including a role for union environment reps and the need for unions to lobby the Metro Mayors.

The AGM agreed the 2017 Annual Report and 2018 Work Plan. The GJA programme of work in 2018 focuses on trade union and community campaigning. We look forward to a year of providing resources and support for trades unions and others in the challenging times ahead.

3. Get training on Air Pollution

We have been one of the few organisations to highlight the **workplace impacts** of bad air quality, and the need to focus attention on the responsibilities of employers. It continues to be a major public and occupational health hazard. In December, we launched the first of a series of regional training events in Manchester with the Hazards Campaign. It proved to be very successful and further events are scheduled in Leeds on January 26th and London on February 9th. ([Details here](#))

More training is planned for the Midlands and the Southern Region. It will also feature at the **Hazards Conference** taking place on July 27-29th, 2018 at Keele University. GJA is supporting the conference. Sponsorship details here: <http://bit.ly/2FXncZV>

4. Industrial Strategy wants a Just Transition

The GJA spent a lot of time attending conferences and responding to consultations in December linked to the Government's Industrial Strategy. There is increasing concern that the Clean Growth Strategy will join a long list of past failed policy initiatives. A major issue is the lack of any reference to international commitments like the UN's Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement.

The GJA has made representations to government on the need to include support for a Just Transition that features in the Paris Agreement. This lays down the principle that worker engagement and social justice should be at the heart of industrial strategy. The GJA published a statement at the AGM which sets out the measures needed to ensure international compliance. It can be found [here](#).

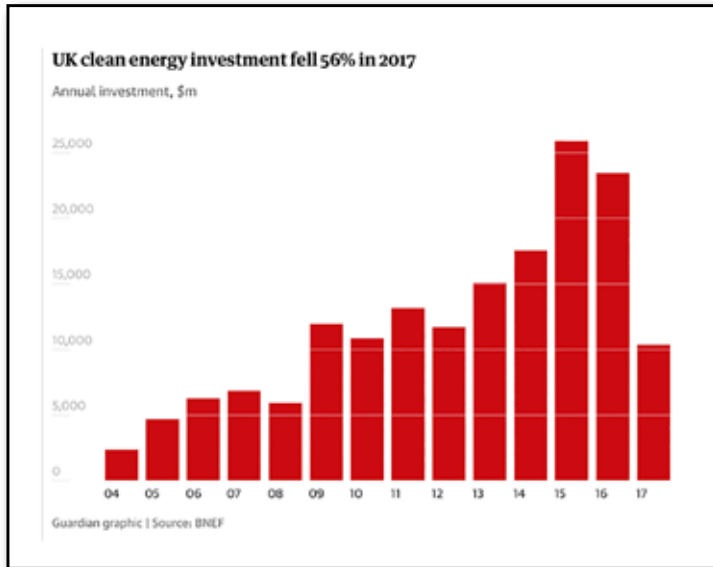
5. Local Skills Strategies - how Metro Mayors can step in

1,200 Carillion apprentices are among the casualties as the firm collapsed. It's part of a wider picture that shows the UK's apprenticeship 'strategy' is a mess. The 3 million government target looks like more wishful thinking. The reliance on the private sector that runs through all these strategies has been thrown into sharp relief by the Carillion fiasco, with trainees sent home, their courses incomplete through the failure of government out-sourcing policies.



The GJA is also working with local and regional unions on how to make better use of so-called Section 106 planning agreements to support decent jobs. These legal agreements between developers and local authorities should contain clear provisions covering local impacts and include supporting quality employment provision. Unions will need to lobby hard to be engaged. For example, our response to the Greater London Authority Skills Strategy consultation that ended on January 2nd highlighted the failure to identify how unions would be involved. The devolution of skills funding to Metro Mayors makes it even more important for unions to address this – an issue that we will take up in 2018.

6. UK green energy investment collapses



Investment in renewable energy in the UK was 'dramatically lower' in 2017 compared to 2016, according to a new report <http://bit.ly/2mCOMVr>

Investment in new wind, solar and other renewable projects fell by more than half (56%), dropping for the second year in a row. A key reason is the Government's failure to offer new energy contracts out into the 2020s. As the Campaign Against Climate Change blogged <https://www.campaigncc.org/blog> the Chancellor's November Budget contained an alarming announcement for renewable energy: there will be "no new low carbon electricity levies until 2025."

In January 2018, MPs on the Environmental Audit Committee were told that UK is facing a widening green investment gap, made worse by the Government's decision to sell the UK's only Green Investment Bank to a private equity outfit.

While renewables investment in wind, solar and other sources slumped by 56% to £7.5bn in the UK, worldwide spending climbed 3% to £242.4bn, the second-highest level on record. Around half of the UK spend, \$4.8bn, was a final investment decision by Ørsted of Denmark on a single huge offshore windfarm, the Hornsea 2 project off the Yorkshire coast.

Alan Whitehead MP, shadow energy minister, said:



"The government's green rhetoric is nothing more than empty promises. Their ideologically-driven policy lurches away from clean solar power and onshore wind has spooked investors."

"Whilst saying they have ambitions to be a green government their actions point in the opposite direction with renewables support slashed at the same time that fracking has been given the go ahead."

Green Investment Bank sold down under



The National Audit Office inquiry into the Tories decision to sell of the nation's Green Investment Bank found that the Government had sold it too cheaply. The lucky buyer, Australian hedge fund Macquarie, "has no legal obligation to ensure GIB will keep focusing on its green objectives and be an 'enduring institution' for years to come." <http://bit.ly/2Dm5eyD>

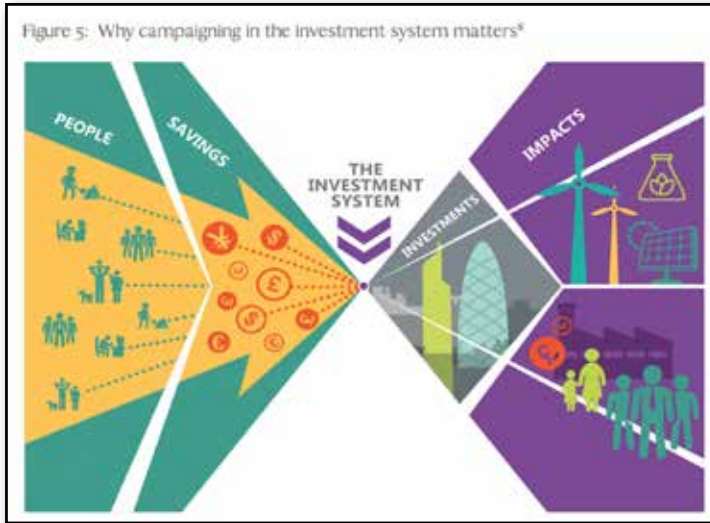
Originally Labour's idea, the bank was a centrepiece of the coalition government's efforts to kickstart the green economy. It invested £12bn of public and private capital in offshore windfarms, waste-to-energy plants and energy-saving projects. Every £1 of public money attracted another £2.50 of private investment. But, three years after it was launched, ministers said it would be sold to pay off public debt.

<http://bit.ly/2rot9fo>

Unlike many leading European nations, the privatisation leaves Britain without a public investment bank to support green projects.

7. Divestment - no room for excuses now

The government is to allow Britain's £2 trillion workplace pension schemes to dump their shares in oil, gas and coal companies more easily, empowering them to take investment decisions to fight climate breakdown <http://bit.ly/2BtDM1P> Until now, pension schemes like the London Borough of Hackney have often claimed to be blocked by "fiduciary duties" to get the best return on their shares regardless of whether they are in fossil fuels or high carbon industries.



Now, in a major victory for campaigners, the government is to introduce new investment regulations that will allow pension schemes to "mirror members' ethical concerns."

Hot on the heels of the Government's announcement, UNISON published *Local Government Pension Funds – Divest From Carbon Campaign* <http://bit.ly/2DwZKV5>

The handbook tells you all you need to know about how local government pension schemes work and how you can influence their investment decisions.

UNISON says that £16 billion was invested in the fossil fuel industry by local government pension funds. At its annual conference 2017, UNISON resolved to campaign for divestment from these companies because of the devastating consequences that climate disruption will have on people, societies and the natural world.

With five million members of local government pension schemes, and over 13,000 different employers paying into them, the union believes its campaign will resonate with a wide audience and is in a strong position to influence the pensions agenda. <http://bit.ly/2Do3p8g>

8. John McDonnell at Jobs and Climate Conference, March 10

The Shadow Chancellor has been invited to open this year's standout national trade union conference, **Planning for a future which doesn't cost the earth**, organised by the Campaign against Climate Change Trade Union Group. A great line up of speakers and workshops challenges the false choice of good jobs versus the environment. We need both, the CACC argues. There's an "urgent need for action on climate change and a real opportunity for trade unionists to be at the forefront of campaigning for a transition."

Speakers include: John McDonnell MP, Shadow Chancellor. Chris Baugh, Dep Gen Sec PCS. Sarah Woolley, Bakers Union. Liz Hutchins, FOE. Prof. Joanna Haigh, Grantham Institute. Suzanne Jeffery, CACC. Mika Minio-Paluello, Platform. Rebecca Long Bailey MP, Labour shadow Business Secretary. Asad Rehman, War on Want, and more.

Sessions include:

- Jobs & Climate: Challenging a false choice
- What is happening to our planet and why this is a trade union issue
- Planning for a National Climate Service today
- Climate and Women: Women on the frontline
- Environmental Reps: campaigning for change in the workplace
- Food & Agriculture - is a sustainable food system possible?
- Climate Refugees: Understanding the issues for the trade union movement
- Planning for Just Transition - taking inspiration from the past and present

Workshops will also be led by key trade union and

environmental campaigns: The Greener Jobs Alliance, Trade Unions for Energy Democracy & The Lucas Plan

Help spread the word!

- Invite friends and share on social media [Facebook event here](#)
- Distribute [flyers](#) for the conference [contact info@campaigncc.org](mailto:info@campaigncc.org) if you would like some
- Get your local trade union branch or trades council to support the conference - [see template motion](#)



**Saturday 10 March 2018, 10:00 am – 5:00 pm,
NUT Conference Centre,
Hamilton House,
Mabledon Place,
Euston, London WCH 9BD**

9. International

A matter of life and death

Sitting at a desk writing responses to consultation documents can give you a distorted view about environmental action. That's why the GJA wants to pay tribute to the 188 environmental activists who literally put their life on the line in 2017 – though the final figure of those murdered for their beliefs is still to be confirmed

<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/ng-interactive/2017/jul/13/the-defenders-tracker>

New Zealand: unions on climate alert

It's not just in the UK that unions are waking up to the impacts of climate breakdown on their members' livelihoods. New Zealand Council of Trade Unions Secretary Sam Huggard said that he is worried people working in New Zealand don't realise how much their livelihoods are at risk from climate breakdown.

“The Stocktake Report from the Government's Climate Change Adaptation Working Group shows that we haven't had the conversations we need with working people about climate change. I think a lot of Kiwis would be horrified to know that our biggest employing sectors like primary industries and tourism are about to have a radical shake-up. It's reasonable that New Zealanders need time to process the enormous impact climate disruption will have on their families and livelihoods.”

The previous Government left unions entirely out when preparing this report. As a result there is lack of focus on the climate impacts on employment, incomes, careers and the readiness of working people.

“Unions are ready to work with Government on a plan for a Just Transition that protects incomes and gives working people the skills they need for future-proof jobs. Lessons learned from overseas show the more input working people have into the adaptation process, the better the outcomes for them and their communities.”

<http://www.union.org.nz/new-zealanders-need-time-to-upskill-for-climate-change/>



Air pollution – A Trade Union issue

Friday, January 26th, 2018 from 1.00pm – 4.00pm

Air pollution in the UK is a public health emergency. Over 40,000 people die each year from causes linked to the air that they breathe – more than obesity and alcohol combined.

Workers are exposed to and create pollution to fulfil contractual obligations to employers. It is an occupational health issue that employers take little responsibility for.

Attending this course will help you to:

- Examine why air pollution is both a workplace issue and a public health one
- Find out about air pollution busting Citizen Science techniques
- Create action plans to deal with workplace exposures
- Create action plans to meaningfully engage in air pollution with local councils
- Share experience, knowledge and ideas

Lunch provided

PCS Offices,
3rd Floor
Town Centre House,
Merrion Centre
Leeds LS2 8LY

Registration is required.
Please confirm your attendance by email to:
janet@gmhzards.org.uk

For further information please contact Janet Newsham on Tel 0161 6367558



Air pollution – A Trade Union issue

Friday, February 9th, 2018 from 1.00pm – 4.30pm

Air pollution in the UK is a public health emergency. Over 40,000 people die each year from causes linked to the air that they breathe – more than obesity and alcohol combined.

Workers are exposed to and create pollution to fulfil contractual obligations to employers. It is an occupational health issue that employers take little responsibility for.

Attending this course will help you to:

- Examine why air pollution is both a workplace issue and a public health one
- Find out about air pollution busting Citizen Science techniques
- Create action plans to deal with workplace exposures
- Create action plans to meaningfully engage in air pollution with local councils
- Share experience, knowledge and ideas

Lunch provided

GMB Euston Office
22 Stephenson Way
Euston
London
NW1 2HD

Registration is required.
Please confirm your attendance by email to:
janet@gmhzards.org.uk

For further information please contact Janet Newsham on Tel 0161 6367558

