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**Submission of written evidence to the
Environmental Audit Committee inquiry into Green Jobs.¹**

Introduction

I am a third year Politics student who has taken a keen interest in sustainability research, while championing the ‘*Wellbeing of Future Generations Bill*’ introduced by Lord Bird. This year, our Politics department at the University of East Anglia (UEA) is working with Lord Bird and his team to explore ways to implement ‘The Future Generations Bill’ if it should come about. The Bill will enshrine in law the future generations principle, which ‘seeks to ensure the needs of the present are met, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs’. My dissertation subject would appear to be germane and relevant to the inquiry examining the future of Green Jobs and I am delighted to offer an academic contribution centred on primary and secondary research, which I have done in Peterborough, across Cambridgeshire, and the wider nation, to explore sustainable ways of working in the United Kingdom.

Executive Summary

1. According to The International Labour Organisation, Green Jobs are jobs in any economic sector (e.g agriculture, industry, services, administration) which contribute to preserving, restoring and enhancing environmental quality.² The negative impact of climate change is not just limited to the environment. The seismic shift is affecting the economy and the very livelihoods of people in the United Kingdom. Despite a looming recession, major economic and job crises, the Covid-19 pandemic has presented an opportunity to finally change ways of working to be more sustainable for the future. While the government plays a crucial role in driving behavioural change from business and the public, the chief aim of this submission of evidence is to recommend effective and practical ways to tackle the expected rise in unemployment due to Covid-19 in a sustainable way. Likewise, this paper is going to draw from various schools of thought and suggest green job opportunities the government should consider. Prior to actioning a nationwide Green Jobs programme, this submission will highlight the importance of legislating for a coherent and aggressive sustainability policy to make provision for public bodies, the private sector and civic society as a whole to act in the pursuit of the environmental, social, economic and cultural wellbeing of the United Kingdom.

Green Recovery: An opportunity to ‘Build Back Better’

2. The pandemic has resurrected the importance of sustainable development and the urgent need to shift to a low carbon economy. While we have seen millions of people rendered jobless in a matter of weeks and months, we have also seen an astronomical change in ways of working and a shift in skill needs across different sectors. This presents the opportunity to create a recovery that is both green and inclusive. Such recovery can be defined by its potential to create opportunities for employment bringing prosperity and growth, and at the same time accelerate action on medium and long-term environmental goals, national and global.³The

¹ Environmental Audit Committee. ‘Inquiry into Green Jobs’ *UK Parliament*. Available at: <https://committees.parliament.uk/call-for-evidence/314/green-jobs/>

² Are ‘green’ jobs decent? (2012). *International Labour Office (International Journal of Labour Research 2012: v. 4:2.*

³ OECD (2020) ‘Making the Green Recovery work for jobs, income and growth’. *OECD Publishing*.

United Kingdom now has an opportunity to put an end to tokenistic green policies and finally galvanise a formidable green recovery once and for all.

3. The government has made a good start, setting out ambitious commitments in a 10-point plan for a green industrial revolution. Given the scale of the challenge an aggressive, cohesive and inclusive ‘green’ law needs to be actioned to make it reality. Economies moving towards greener production can seize this potential for job creation – which is particularly relevant for recovery from the current economic crisis⁴. Although the United Kingdom’s climate change strategy was underpinned by the Climate Change Act (2008), the plan to introduce legally binding targets to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 80% by 2020 has not yet been met; even with the coronavirus pandemic there has only been an estimated 5% fall in gas emissions.⁵
4. **The United Kingdom needs and deserves an aggressive restructuring plan to provide training and education in the necessary green technology skills to support new jobs.** The policy needs to levy on co-ordinated net zero aligned financial investments and a robust legislation for developing innovative carbon capture technologies. Moreover, there are three key elements to consider in the process of building a low carbon economy in the United Kingdom. The elements include: **Environmental Stewardship:** Ensure environmental awareness becomes an integral part of education and training of new skills. **Responsibility:** Every company should have a sustainability strategy and execution plan embedded within their culture and operational agenda. A green policy should not be limited to the environment but should promote safety, health and employee wellbeing⁶ **Governance:** Vision, Mission and Values must be clear. “There should be a public statement articulating a company’s raison d’être (reason for existing).”⁷ This will encourage accountability and transparency.
5. The government should make a domestic ambition over the next decade to align with 1.5°C and net zero targets.⁸ Leaving the question: how can business grow and succeed without consuming too many resources or having a negative environmental/societal impact? The following recommendations aim to give policy makers, business and the wider civic society the opportunity to consider ways on how to create new green jobs, remodel old ones and restructure organisations centred on sustainability. More importantly, the transition to a greener economy depends crucially on having the right skills available. Therefore, policy makers need to take a holistic and integrated approach in helping business create comprehensive training in response to specific skills needs for each industry.

Decarbonising the Energy Sector

6. Cleaner production can be promoted: through “targets for reduction of CO2 emissions or the dissemination of green technologies, incentive structures such as taxes, subsidies, rebates, emissions trading mechanisms or feed-in tariffs for renewable energy, industrial and technology policies to support green practices and sectors and policies to promote research and development in pursuit of green innovation.”⁹ Greening existing jobs and creating new

⁴ Strietska-Ilina, O. (2011) ‘Skills for green jobs : a global view : synthesis report based on 21 country studies’. *International Labour Office*.

⁵ Ambrose, J. (2020) ‘Carbon emissions from fossil fuels could fall by 2.5bn tonnes in 2020’ *Guardian*.

⁶ Hedstrom, G. S. (2018) *Sustainability : What It Is and How to Measure It*. *DEG Press*.

⁷ *Ibid.* p.39

⁸ IPPR Environmental Justice Commission (2020). ‘Faster, Further and Fairer, Putting people at the heart of tackling the climate and nature emergency.’ Interim report of the IPPR Environmental Justice Commission. *Institute for Public Policy Research*.

⁹ Strietska-Ilina, 2011, p.9

jobs such as the development of Carbon Capture Storage (CSS) will be pertinent to tackling the job crisis while truly making a green recovery. **It is paramount to recognise policies are implemented by people, who therefore must be equipped with necessary skills, knowledge and environmental awareness in their workplace.** Moreover, training and response measures are successful where they are “coherent across policy domains, systemic and systematic, and targeted at disadvantaged groups.”¹⁰

Decarbonising Transport

7. In 2018, “an estimated 33 per cent of carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions were from the transport sector, 27 per cent from energy supply, 18 per cent from business and 18 per cent from the residential sector.”¹¹ With road transport emissions one of the biggest contributors to the greenhouse effect, creating and greening existing jobs in the transport sector will be key to going net-zero by 2050. Likewise, establishing Low Carbon Economic Areas (LCEAs) will accelerate economic growth in targeted geographical areas with advantages such as existing regional expertise and a skills base.¹² This will ensure all regions have equal access to funding and resources needed to restructure cities into green areas. The government needs to: 1) **Improve public transport and urban design for people and business to make low carbon choices (such as public transport incentives, more cycleways and e-bikes in cities rather than carbon-emitting private vehicles).**¹³ Potential job opportunities include civil engineering, city planning and development, maintenance. 2) **Introduce carbon premiums and tax across sectors especially the aviation industry and companies which contribute most to gas emissions.** Potential job opportunities include inspectors, researchers and engineers of carbon technologies. 3) **Greater investment on electric cars and rails.** Potential job opportunities include engineering, construction, city planning and development.

Innovative Technology

8. Support for research and development for innovation is fundamental to creating a coherent green jobs programme. Therefore, the government needs to consider increasing access to resources and finances for companies through the UK Innovation Investment Fund. While, government incentives such as free college courses for adults without A-levels present an opportunity to boost employment and upskill the existing workforce.¹⁴ More needs to be done. **A key recommendation would be for the government to work with large employers, council authorities and Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) to bring new, high-quality job opportunities backed by financial incentives to the country’s social mobility cold spots.** In particular, it could assign some of the remaining Local Growth Fund to LEPs within the worst 10 social mobility cold spots to formulate 10-year plans for creating higher-skilled and quality jobs.¹⁵ Likewise, the government should overhaul the Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) and take an integrated approach in working with the UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES) to identify and reduce skills gaps and shortages in their

¹⁰ ‘Skills for green jobs in the UK’ (2010). *Cedefop*.

¹¹ Statistical Release: National Statistics (2018) ‘2018 UK Greenhouse Gas Emissions, Provisional Figures’. *Open Government Licence*.

¹² Skills for green jobs in the UK’ (2010). *Cedefop*, p.17

¹³ *Ibid.* p.13

¹⁴ Murphy, S. (2020) ‘Adults in England without A-levels to get free college course’. *Guardian*.

¹⁵ Social Mobility Commission (2016). State of the Nation 2016: Social Mobility in Great Britain. *Open Government Licence*.

sector, improve the skills of their sector's workforce, ensure the supply of skilled labour to the market, and improve the supply of learning provision to meet employer demand.¹⁶

Eco buildings and Green Homes

9. For homes and buildings, use of sustainable materials will not only benefit the environment but cut down energy costs and water waste. While initiatives like the Green Homes Grant are a good step forward to encouraging homeowners to invest in low carbon heat and energy efficient improvements, more needs to be done. Not only does it discriminate against people who do not own homes, but in addition there is little or no incentive for business and there lacks a plan for run down estates. **New skills and training will be key to greening existing jobs and creating new occupations. Job opportunities to consider range from engineering design of air source heat pumps to replace gas boilers to the construction workers who will have to safely install the equipment in homes and buildings.**¹⁷ Moreover, to 'build back better' and create more employment opportunities, the government needs to: 1) Take an integrated approach in partnering sub-contractors across the nation to ensure every region has equal access to builders. 2) Consider working with local councils and local business. 3) Encourage eco-home start-ups. 4) Provide training and resources on low carbon and water recycling technologies. **Furthermore, more jobs can be created if the government took opportunity to approve the Heseltine Panel's proposals on redeveloping the worst estates.**¹⁸ This project targets run down neighbourhoods where a large percentage of people have no further education, comprehensive skills or training. Development projects such as these present the opportunity for social mobility by giving locals the opportunity to learn new skills and secure jobs, raising self-esteem and restoring personal pride with all the knock-on effects this offers.

Concluding Remarks

10. A cohesive and aggressive green policy coupled with a plan of action to meet the skills and training gap should be high on the policy agenda. It goes without saying, we need to transform our economic model to ensure environmental and human sustainability lie at the heart of economic health. A green recovery will create opportunities for sustainable jobs, prosperity and growth in our post-Covid world. **Sector and regional differences in both skills needs and industry are important to consider as part of green recovery efforts to target the most disadvantaged people, especially ethnic minorities and women.** Renewable Energy Agency (IRENA) estimates that renewable energy could employ more than 40 million people by 2050 and that total energy sector employment can reach 100 million by 2050, up from around 58 million today, should the international community utilise its full renewable energy potential. Energy efficiency also offers significant opportunities for rapid job creation, with the IEA estimating potential of up to 2.5 million new jobs per year as part of recovery efforts.¹⁹ The United Kingdom's economic, social and environmental prosperity will be shaped by how the government deals with and recovers from the impact of the pandemic.

¹⁶ Skills for green jobs in the UK' (2010). *Cedefop*, p.21

¹⁷ 'Are 'green' jobs decent?' (2012). *International Labour Office (International Journal of Labour Research 2012: v. 4:2.*

¹⁸ Social Mobility Commission (2016). *State of the Nation 2016: Social Mobility in Great Britain. Open Government Licence.*

¹⁹ OECD (2020) 'Making the Green Recovery work for jobs, income and growth'. *OECD Publishing, p.10*

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