



1. Editorial: Four answers to the energy and climate crises

The rapidly increasing costs of fossil fuels in the context of “post pandemic” increases in demand, overlaid by the impact of the war in Ukraine and sanctions attendant on it that will get worse the longer it goes on, will drive mass discontent that will really hit home; particularly after the next rise in the price cap in October. The gaping climate holes in the government’s strategy are onshore wind and retrofitting. This makes agitational campaigns on both imperative.

There’s scope for a series of community **onshore wind campaigns**; based on the areas where there are turbines that could be erected in the next two years but are blocked by planning rules. The nimby, aesthetic arguments put forward by the right on this are just a fig leaf for wanting to protect fossil fuel interests, because most people support onshore wind farms. These campaigns could be very broad; a coalition of opposition parties (and even some Tories) community energy organisations, local environment and labour movement activists, green energy companies like Octopus (whose plans these are). If the government’s line is they will engage with “a limited number of local communities” that support onshore wind, we have a job to do to show just how many do and put them on the back foot, especially with the offer of lower bills in exchange for proximity (an open door, given that the closer people are to onshore wind the more they tend to support it).

On **insulation**, there is a similarly broad front pushing for it, but there are some quite sharp differences on different programmes and their suitability, different materials used in insulation, the role of heat pumps, the potential (or not) for green hydrogen and the whole issue of whether to go for deep retrofits (upgrades) where everything is tackled at once, or have a phased approach prioritising insulation. At present this is subordinated to the sheer lack of capacity in the sector to go much faster than the snail’s pace we are currently going at - without a significant increase in targeted training and guaranteed investment from the state - without which local authorities won’t have the capacity to do what many of them want to, and the private sector won’t move either. We should push for a state led approach and point out the failings of the current government’s presumption that the private sector will lead without absolute guarantees of the profitable market which they are not providing.

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Quote of the Month

Our addiction to fossil fuels is killing us

Antonio Guterres

On **public ownership** - there's probably a broad consensus at the TUC on this, which might have an impact on the Labour conference if worded in a way that could gather support across the board and pull the whole movement into a forward-facing position.

On a **windfall tax**, there is even more massive support for this and it should be made permanent while the private sector continues to dominate, at 56% on the Norwegian model. Elected governments should make decisions about green investment, not have to beg the private companies who have cut their North Sea investment by 90% in the last decade to do so.

All of this can come together at the TUC demo on June 18th. Hope to see you there.

Paul Atkin

2. Green Skills and Jobs – the confusion continues

The Government ambition to lead a 'green industrial revolution' in the UK is falling apart at the seams. Nothing sums this up more than their performance on notionally one of the more straightforward aspects of their industrial strategy. Unlike other parts of energy strategy there is a fair measure of consensus over what needs to be done to retrofit energy inefficient buildings. What is clearly lacking is a coherent policy that addresses the skills and funding constraints in the current system. The GJA reported on this in our **Insulation Special** last year. Regional and local authorities have been trying to fill the void. Despite the best of intentions most of these attempts suffer from 5 crucial weaknesses:

- **Funding** – Councils net-zero strategies will need to rapidly decarbonise homes in the next 8 years. The current funding from the Government and other sources represents a fraction of what is needed.
- **Policy** – Throwing money at this will not work if it is not linked to a long-term policy framework commitment. Instead, what we have is small pots of money for short-term projects.
- **Co-ordination** – The notion persists that the market can deliver the change needed. This is absurd. Local authorities must seize the initiative and establish direct labour departments to lead.

- **Social justice** – Prioritising social housing will go a long way to addressing concerns about fuel poverty.
- **Union engagement** – Very few local authority plans have been discussed with their recognised unions or community-based bodies like trade union councils. If they were then crucial standards could be addressed like:
 - *decent terms and conditions, including union membership rights*
 - *recruitment of local labour that support diversity measures*
 - *quality apprenticeship and training programmes*
 - *procurement and supply chain criteria that cover the above.*

Things to do

1. Get a seat at the table – GJA members are currently sitting on some of the Green Skills Academies that have been established recently. Experience so far reflects the concerns outlined above. It is vital that unions call for the establishment of these in all large local and sub-regional authorities. If anyone is interested in finding out more, please contact us. We are trying to establish the extent of union involvement and have piloted a Just Transition survey of local authorities in the Yorkshire and Humber region. The plan is to send it out via the TUC to all regions in England

and Wales after the May 5th local elections when new leadership teams will be in place.

2. Lobby your local authority – We also want to lobby local authorities on the 5 elements of this programme. Initiatives like the **Climate Action Network West Midlands** action illustrate what can be done.

The Local Government Association has recognised some of the challenges on retrofit and unions should use this to **initiate consultation**

Nationally the Government is in the process of setting up a **Transition Plan Taskforce**. Unions are not mentioned in the terms of reference. We must continue to demand that a transition without social justice at its heart is unacceptable. A good start for this is to take part in the **ITUC CEPOW action on 22 June**, which coordinates union reps at workplace or enterprise level initiating the discussion with employers on decarbonising the workplace.

Graham Petersen



3. NEU declares Code Red

At its first in person conference for three years, the National Education Union overwhelmingly passed a motion noting the latest IPCC Report that we are at “code red”, that 75% of young people believe “the future is frightening” and 54% that “humanity is doomed”, but that governments, especially in wealthy countries like Britain, are failing to address the climate crisis seriously, with continuing support for fossil fuel industries, including plans to develop new oilfields in the North Sea, subsidising road building ten times more than trains, failing to insulate homes and buildings to generate climate jobs or review the curriculum to make it fit to address the crisis; while cutting overseas aid needed by the Global South.

Conference affirmed that we need massive investment in renewable energy - including wind, solar, and tidal power - but that nuclear power will drain investment from renewables, is more expensive, slow to build and risky, Biomass is high carbon, as are most sources of Hydrogen and Carbon Capture schemes are unproven and small scale and often used as cover for business as usual.

And that we need a Global Just Transition, which requires significantly increased public sector investment and control, a jobs and retraining guarantee for workers in stranded sectors, and transfers of the technology, training and resources needed for the Global South to develop without reliance on fossil fuels.

And committed us as educators, and sometimes school leaders, to be at the forefront of campaigning to ensure that the young people we educate have a future.

The Executive was instructed to campaign with other unions, school students and campaigns to: end the use of fossil fuels, generalise public transport and green cities, make our buildings carbon neutral and adapt them for extreme weather, with renewable energy sources for energy, schools as community hubs and exemplars; and all school buildings retrofitted by 2030, implement the Education International manifesto call for quality climate change education for every student and achieve a new legislative framework for transition, giving duties to employers and rights to workers.



Lisa Tunnel, Jenny Cooper and Paul Atkin speaking at the first ever in person climate fringe meeting at NEU conference. Photo Kois Miah Educate

An amendment calling for sustainability and environmental education to be embedded through the entire curriculum, so that it is preparing and mobilising our society for a sustainable future, bringing about change in our world and our behaviour, noting that debate about how to resolve this existential crisis for humanity cannot be constrained by the temporary policies of the government of the day, for the union to work with supportive political parties as well as school students, for a “through a review of the whole curriculum from the top where possible, and innovative practice from below when necessary” and for Gender and ethnic disparities in skills training and recruitment for key transition sectors and STEM to be targeted and closed was also passed overwhelmingly.

The NEU Climate Change Network sees implementing this as a task for the whole union membership, not just the Executive. so, we’re going to be busy.

Paul Atkin

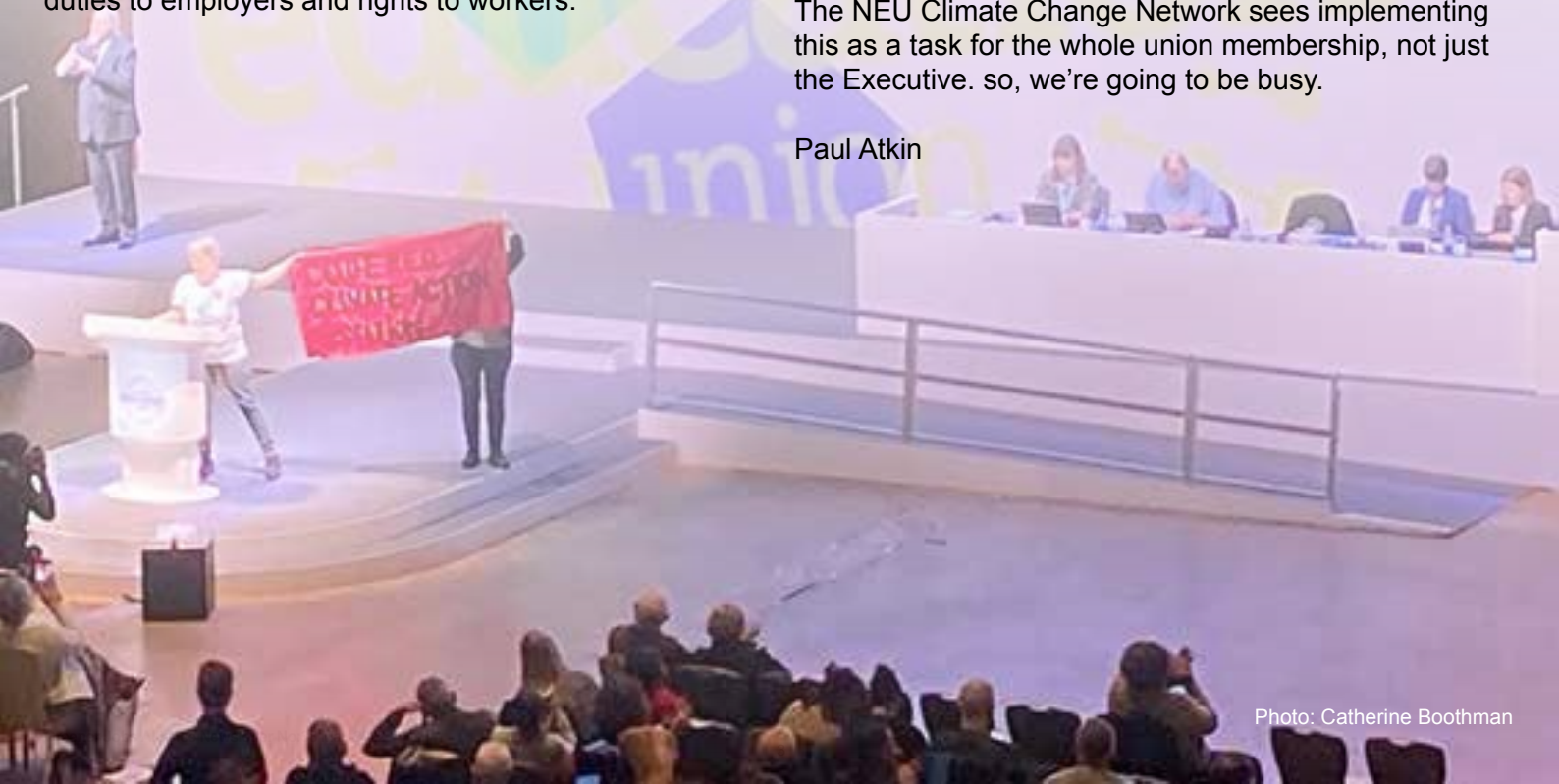


Photo: Catherine Boothman

4. DFE – Walking with Dinosaurs

Despite Education Secretary Nadhim Zahawi acknowledging that “Learners need to know the truth about climate change” and “must also be given the hope that they can be agents of change” the **strategy launched by the DFE** on 21 April in the Great Hall at the Natural History Museum fell well short of that; and was met with a critical reaction from Education unions and the student climate movement.

NEU press release is [here](#).

Teach the Future’s response is [here](#).

Paul Whiteman, general secretary of NAHT, said:

“... it is vital that education about the environment, climate and sustainability is embedded throughout the curriculum at all key stages - all children and young people should be supported to develop their knowledge and understanding of the world we live in, including environmental issues which they feel passionately about.”

Let’s Go Zero press release is [here](#).

1. The issues they have prioritised are either good but limited – National Nature Park (trying to make the ground area of the schools estate nationally greener and more diverse with a lot of shared practice)– or off base – Climate Leaders Award (seeing transition as the work of exceptional individuals not a vast collective effort by all of us) - and are prioritised because they don’t cost much.
2. The commitments on upgrading the school estate are tokenistic, as the spending needed even to carry out the pilot projects they have planned as the first stage are being blocked by the Treasury; and only new 4 schools and 1 college will have been built using the Gen Zero model by 2025. Zahawi nevertheless described this as “ambitious”. Ambition were made of sterner stuff. In this context, it seems that the civil servants working on this have prioritised getting some relatively cheap baseline infrastructure, like smart meters, in place by 2025; so, there is a foundation for a more ambitious government to build on relatively quickly. Setting up timetabling, targeting and accountability has been postponed to 2025, after the next election.
3. They are only reviewing part of the curriculum not all of it. The new Natural History GCSE does not deal with climate change as such, won’t come in for three years, or be covered by all schools, or taken by all students; and can’t bear the weight of the vast shift in mind set that we need across the whole of the education system and society. A better, immediate start on this would have been

to support Jim Knight’s Bill to introduce an hour a week on climate and sustainability via citizenship lessons; which the government has refused to do. The DFE’s “impartiality guidance” will be misused by partisan climate deniers to try to close down debate in schools in the wider “war on woke”; that will have support from the government when it suits it. But there is an opening for a more thorough review from the bottom up, - both in creating learning materials across the board and proposed new sustainability leads in every school, both of which give us levers for change.

4. Without the pressure from the school student movement and support from teachers, giving political expression to the reality of climate breakdown, even these faltering first steps would not have been taken; so we will need to keep that pressure up.

Paul Atkin

**The TUC is currently researching school retrofitting. Full report in next edition.*



5. North American Women Construction Workers to Visit London, June 9-19, 2022

In June 2022, the **University of Westminster's Centre for the Study of the Production of the Built Environment** (PRoBE) hosts a delegation of about 40 women construction workers from North America.

Tradeswomen Building Bridges, the North American Network of Women Working in the Construction Trades, brings women electricians, plumbers, carpenters, machine operators and other workers for 9 learning exchange days focused on increasing women's access to careers in the trades in UK and globally. Tradeswomen Building Bridges' vision is to build transnational solidarity among women working in the trades, to learn about the lives and working conditions of tradeswomen in other parts of the world, and to share best practices for women gaining greater access to careers in the trades.

The aim of the delegation is to galvanize support for greater inclusion of women in the construction sector, to express solidarity with women training and working in the industry, and to provide a focus for discussion and action to build a European and global network of women in construction. The 2022 Delegation events include:

- A Best Practice Workshop for Stakeholders, where case studies of successful strategies for increasing women in construction are discussed.
- Discussions with community activists on the redevelopment of the former Holloway Prison site and plans to reduce carbon emissions and to employ and train women in the construction.
- A Fun Day in the Park, for the community and general public, to promote women entering construction, with stalls, games, events and speakers, to take place in Caledonian Park.
- Discussion with Islington Council on their policies and activities to improve gender equity in construction employment and training.
- Visit to Further Education Colleges and construction training workshops.
- A research forum on strategies for bringing women into construction trades, covering the themes of empowerment, procurement, and zero carbon construction.
- Discussions with Unite the Union on its initiatives on women in construction.
- Networking days in partnership with the Building and Woodworkers International (BWI) and the European Federation of Building and Wood Workers (EFBWW).
- Site visits
- An event at the Houses of Parliament, hosted by the Chartered Institute of Building, to inform and discuss with policy makers the barriers to be overcome and how success in including women in construction can be achieved.

Low carbon construction, in particular retrofit, offers new opportunities for women to enter what has been an almost exclusively white male workforce, with less than 1% of women in Britain. However, whilst there is much to learn from the delegates about increasing the participation of construction tradeswomen to over 10% in some areas, green construction often remains a dirty word, and women may be threatened with the sack for raising environmental issues. In this respect, the delegation will provide a learning process for all concerned.

Linda Clarke

6. Building it Green - the Canadian model

Canada's Building Trades Unions (CBTU), funded by the Canadian government, are leading a **4-year research and development programme**, on embedding climate literacy into the building trades, with the aim to ensure that the construction workforce is equipped with the expertise necessary to deliver zero energy buildings. As part of this, the European team, based at the Centre for the Study of the Production of the Built Environment (ProBE) at the University of Westminster in London has the task to investigate best practice examples of climate literacy in vocational education and training (VET) for construction trainees and the current workforce in the UK, Ireland, Belgium, Denmark, German and Sweden, particularly for carpenters, insulators, plumbers and electricians. The team is investigating how climate and energy literacy have been incorporated into curricula, including:

- whether and how occupational interfaces are addressed and interdisciplinary learning facilitated
- the extent to which curricula seek to develop competences such as communication, team-working and self-management
- the challenges and barriers to developing and delivering curricula
- the role of stakeholders, including trade unions, employers, colleges and municipalities, and the ways in which they collaborate in developing and delivering effective VET in zero carbon construction.

As well as being incorporated into the development of climate literacy in Canada, the findings of the research will be disseminated and shared widely and are expected to contribute to climate literacy development internationally and serve as a resource for training providers, unions and employers.

At the recent CBTU conference, held in Ottawa at the end of April it was evident how much addressing climate change is a priority for the building unions in Canada, including oil-rich Alberta, with delegates from all provinces and from the First Nations seeing this a crucial part of their agenda. CBTU Chief Executive, Sean Strickland, as well as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, who attended and spoke at a conference reception, made constant reference to the environmental challenges facing construction. And



these were raised again at the very moving and well-attended commemoration of International Workers Memorial day on 28th April, attended also by the Labour Minister, where wreaths were laid by delegates from each Canadian province to honour those killed on construction sites. This regard for the unions and the environment, including by government, is a sharp contrast to the situation in UK and even more over the border in the US.

For further information concerning Building it Green, please contact Linda Clarke at clarkel@wmin.ac.uk

Linda Clarke



7. Lucas Style Just Transition at Rolls Royce? The story so far.

In November 2020, Unite published an article arguing that UK manufacturers should diversify their products to keep the workforce employed throughout the pandemic and to tackle the climate crisis: highlighting themes similar to the Lucas Aerospace Combine Committee Alternative Corporate Strategy of 1976/7.

Following publication, a Unite Political Officer in the West Midlands reported discussions with Rolls Royce at the Ansty Plant in Coventry about just such a Plan to secure a long-term future for the plant and members' jobs. This Just Transition / Green New Deal Plan involved Unite full time officers, senior stewards, Unite representatives, Hilary Wainwright (Lucas Plan Academic), Zarah Sultana (Labour MP for Coventry South) and Coventry for a Green New Deal.

Rolls Royce were making major restructuring plans as the aviation industry shut down in the first phase of the COVID-19 outbreak; threatening the Ansty, Barnoldswick and Inchinnan plants with closure.

Unite and GMB combined with environmentalists and community activists to campaign against this threat. Following protests and strike actions, Rolls Royce agreed to a memorandum of understanding (MOU)* in early 2021.

This committed to

- the Barnoldswick plant being kept open for at least ten years
- the Ansty and Inchinnan plants being kept open for five years.
- a training centre at the Barnoldswick plant that would support the development of sustainable technologies to address climate change.

Unite Convenors saw these agreements as an immediate solution to stop plant closures and save jobs, but noted that they only provided the Ansty and Inchinnan plants with a reprieve of five years before potential closure; as most work done there is linked to historical contracts, not new work from new contracts.

So, the Roll Royce Combine Committee designed workshops to discuss whether Just Transition / Green New Deal plans could be developed at all three plants, based on the Ansty model: to future proof the jobs of workers at these plants through an alternative production plan for environmentally friendly/ sustainable products.

Three workshops were convened in which the workforce was invited to develop new sustainable product ideas that could be produced by the plants, given the skill set of the workforce and the technology that they had to work with.

From these workshops, the Rolls Royce Combine proposed manufacturing wind turbine gearboxes at the Ansty Plant to the Rolls Royce management.

The Ventilator Challenge introduced by the UK Government in March 2020, showed it is possible for manufacturers to convert production rapidly if they choose, or are required to do so by the state; with a consortium of producers making 13,437 ventilators for the NHS between April 2020 and July 2020, turning out 6-months worth of production in a week.

But, the Combine Plan was met with indifference from Rolls Royce management. The Ansty Convenor noted that a particular issue for them was that the alternative production plan had come from the workforce. The Lucas Aerospace Combine Committee had experienced the same dismissiveness from Lucas Aerospace management when they submitted their Alternative Plan in 1976/77.

By January this year, that the Rolls Royce management team had not replied to the 'alternative production plans' put to them by the Combine

Committee six months earlier. But, the Combine is campaigning around it with the support of the workforce, local MPs, and communities.

Following the initial MOU agreement, further industrial action took place at Barnoldswick; following complaints by the workforce about how the training centre was being run. This led to an extended agreement for no compulsory redundancies for 5 years and guaranteed new work for the existing workforce with at least 10-years continued manufacturing. In return, the Unite members agreed to the training school being built elsewhere.

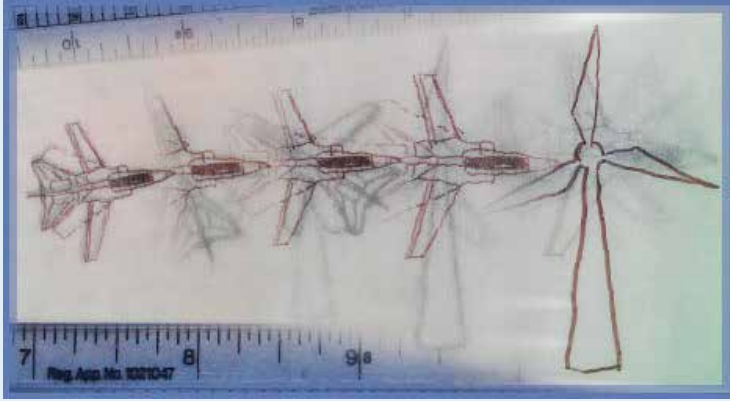
This will probably be in Derby and focus on the Small Modular Reactor (SMR) project.

In February 2022, the Unite National Officer for the Aerospace sector reported that Rolls Royce might re-engage in discussions about the Just Transition / Green New Deal plans and working together with the Combine to decarbonise the business and their products.

Further articles will keep tabs on how this develops.

*A memorandum of understanding is an agreement between two or more parties outlined in a formal document. It is not legally binding but signals the willingness of the parties to move forward with a contract. An MOU can be seen as the starting point for negotiations as it defines the scope and purpose of talks.

8. Historical Background on the Lucas Plan



From fighter bombers to wind turbines.

Photo Arms Conversion – The Lucas Plan

- The Labour Government elected in October 1974 was committed to an election pledge of reducing military expenditure.
- Faced with the threat of job losses due to a reduction in demand for their military aerospace products, the Lucas Aerospace Combine Committee produced a plan, commonly referred to as the Lucas Plan.
- This looked at how Lucas Aerospace could diversify production from military aerospace products into products that were socially useful and environmentally friendly.

The Lucas Aerospace Combine Committee believed that their Alternative Corporate Strategy Plan was dismissed by the management because it challenged the power relations within capitalism.

- the workforce controlled much of the decision-making process, regarding what products would be developed and what products would be produced.
- reducing management control.
- and challenging the established power relations within the capitalist organisation model as a result.

Former Lucas Aerospace Combine members speaking in 2018, said that the vested interests of capital viewed their Alternative Corporate Strategy Plan as a threat to the existing order; in which directors and senior management manage organisations in the interests of owners / shareholders, and profit maximisation is the primary goal; and the workforce knows its place.

The aim of the Lucas Aerospace Combine was instead to produce products of value to society, including environmentally friendly products. The Lucas Aerospace Combine were fighting back for workplace empowerment through industrial and economic decision-making by workers.

The Lucas Aerospace Combine had the support of Tony Benn who helped catalyse the Alternative Corporate Strategy Plan.

As a Labour Government minister, he argued for greater industrial democracy and worker participation in industrial and organisational decision making. These ideas were published in his Alternative Economic and Industrial Strategy policy documents as a socialist alternative to the monetarist policies that would be adopted by Chancellor Dennis Healey and Prime Minister James Callaghan in December 1976 after taking International Monetary Fund (IMF) loans to finance government spending.

Benn believed that this would create a big division between the Labour Party and its support base; leading to defeat at the next election. It did, as Labour were defeated at the next General Election in 1979, when Margaret Thatcher's Conservative Government was elected as Conservative Prime Minister. Thatcher was in power for 11.5 years (1979-1990), and her governments adopted a very hostile approach to trade unions whilst in office.

9. It don't have to be this way. Shanghai LA green corridor

In the teeth of Cold War tensions, **this cooperation** brokered by C40 Cities between Shanghai and LA, the two biggest ports on the Pacific, to

- phase in low, ultra-low, and zero-carbon fuelled ships through the 2020s, with the world's first zero-carbon trans-Pacific container ships introduced by 2030 by qualified and willing shipping lines.
- develop best management practices to help reduce emissions and improve efficiency for all ships using this international trade corridor.
- Reduce supply chain emissions from port operations, improving air quality in the ports of Shanghai and Los Angeles and adjacent communities.

is a crucial initiative that should be replicated elsewhere.



Image: C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group



10. Forgive us our trespasses?

Part of the Police Bill that has just been passed is a new crime of “*Criminal Trespass with intent to reside*”, primarily aimed at criminalising Travellers, punishable with £2,500 fines and imprisonment, it will obviously also be used in the event of workers occupying workplaces as a tactic to avoid closures or to push transition plans.

11. GJA activities round-up

On April 25th, we had a follow up meeting with our AGM guest speaker, Olivia Blake, Labour’s Shadow Minister for Climate Change. Inevitably, much of the time was spent on the energy crisis, GJA representatives emphasising the need for immediate implementation of two key policies: onshore wind and retrofit. Olivia outlined the aspirations for Labour Climate policy, building on the already-welcome pledge to fund a major nationwide retrofit and insulation programme. We were keen to emphasise our support for a windfall tax and the £650 payment, but also to underline the need for an extensive transformation of the energy sector, including public ownership and direct employment. It was a very constructive discussion which we hope to continue in the coming months.

In conjunction with our colleagues at TUC in London and Yorkshire & Humber region, GJA (primarily Graham Petersen) has developed a survey to go out to local authorities in those areas with a view to building a picture of current climate jobs and green skills related policies and implementations. Augmenting this is a second survey, developed by Hilary Wainwright, being sent to trades councils and union branches, seeking similar information about worker-led activities. Between the two we hope to achieve a good mapping of current activities that will help to direct effort where it’s needed and build a widespread movement on climate, jobs and training issues.

We were also pleased to host a presentation at our Steering Group meeting on April 11 from Amy McConnell and Oliver Sidorczyk from the campaign group Zero Hour, describing the Climate and Ecological Emergency Bill currently making its way through Parliament. The CEE Bill is complementary to the Green New Deal Bill, and expresses many of the same sentiments, including a just transition for workers, but takes a strategic approach aimed at securing all-party endorsement in parliament (which it has) as a way of leveraging some progress on these issues at governmental level.

Finally, returning to the energy crisis, GJA is considering hosting a public meeting in the near future, to which we especially invite GJA supporters, to discuss a campaign on energy policy. We are also looking at combining our efforts with friends at CACC, NEF and other groups, within the general framework established by the COP26 coalition, and developing a manifesto of demands around energy that we can all rally around to maximise our campaigning efforts.

Tahir Latif
Secretary, Greener Jobs Alliance

12. Green Bites

Website of the Month

Check the air quality in your post code at,

[addresspollution.org](https://www.addresspollution.org),

let others know about it and follow the Demand Action link.

Its quite alarming for most urban areas. This could be a really useful resource in campaigning for measures to reduce pollution/traffic congestion in local areas and around workplaces if we think creatively about how we can use it collectively.



Statistic of the month

1.3 million

Number of votes Tories would lose if they dropped the Net Zero commitment.
Survey by Onward

84%

of people globally support their own country making a faster transition from fossil to sustainable fuels.

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Supporting the Greener Jobs Alliance

The GJA is a loose coalition of organisations involved in climate change work.

We wish to make it clear that the views expressed in our publications and activities do not necessarily reflect the position of all the organisations whom we work with.

We will always seek to make that clear by listing the organisations that have specifically signed up to a particular initiative.