

MOVING BEYOND CAPITAL-CENTRED GROWTH Planning for jobs across the UK

Introduction

The UK is at a turning point, whether we like it or not. This paper explores how this could be used as an opportunity to reflect on what kind of future we want for the UK. Currently economic growth is directed to where the economy is already strongest. This is further skewing who benefits, with inequality growing across the UK. It is expanding London, building on Green Belt and commuter suburbs, expanding cities and other centres of growth. This capital-centred growth is ignoring climate and environmental challenges and making life and livelihoods for many more precarious and insecure. To redirect the economy of the UK we need a plan, that joins up strategies and investment for jobs and skills, industry and infrastructure, housing and environment to align to the environmental and social challenges of today.

We need to do it in such a way that transitions us to a green future that is climate secure, and ensures no-one is left behind. Attaining a better quality of life for *all* requires a better redistribution of jobs around the UK to rebalance the economy regionally and in terms of income. This needs a rapid transition to shift our economy, politics and ways of living so they are sustainable within our resource and climate limits. This then would give us freedom and security, and generate the most crucial of aspects needed to enhance our collective resilience: hope.

The current economic strategy in the UK backs 'winners', speculation and economic growth where the economy is strongest already: the wrong kind of growth and in the wrong places. Meanwhile, economic planning of the wrong kind frames local plans. We have seen a similar level of urgency and collective effort successfully transform our economy before, such as during the Second World War (Simms, 2001)¹. We need to plan for a better future again. This requires greater state involvement than is currently the case. To deepen our climate response it also needs to be participatory, with a shared vision that cuts across our society to create new social norms, and through community-led plans that sit comfortably within an overall national framework supported by incentives, taxation and regulation that encourages us to work together to do the right thing.

Economic planning and town and country planning should be fused together to create a clear spatial and economic plan for the UK: agreeing what is developed, how and where. We can create a million climate jobs, social enterprise jobs and rural economy and farming jobs across the UK. These could rebalance the rural-urban divide with new types of businesses such as cooperatives and social enterprises. We can afford to transform consumption patterns. We can share the benefits that will result from displacing speculative investment with less capital, more employment-intensive and more localised production. This will require joined up planning to be matched by local investment and involvement, to transform what we know and understand sustainable living to be, and what we believe is possible together.

This paper will first explore how the trends towards a gig economy and automation provide an opportunity for this to be realised as a new approach, before setting out why, what and how such a green industrial strategy might be realised.

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1. Turning the Disruption of Automation into Transformative Change

Dirk Holemans (2017)² recently set out the need to redefine what is meant by freedom and security today. He suggests that, just as Karl Polanyi proposed in *The Great Transformation*³, that we now stand at a turning point in history. Our choice is whether we give up our freedom for the (in)security fostered upon us by populist politicians – or collectively realise the possibility of a better future, where our freedom and security are co-created.

I believe this latter vision is something that we need to share, aspire to, attach hope to, and to make happen together. This means it must be planned. This paper explores ideas of what such a plan might entail – both at the national and local levels in the UK.

Another way that Holemans considers this turning point is in terms of how society responds to the widely documented trends in increasing automation and robotisation, including the development of platform capitalism and big data companies that are disrupting traditional sectors – such as Uber and Airbnb. Holemans calls for better regulation of these new forms of business, and the use of a citizens income (also referred to as a universal basic income) to re-establish a social safety net to address changing needs in our society as more and more people are reliant on insecure gigs in zero hour contracts for income. But as well as citizen income to ensure no one is left behind, we need to work together to realise the radically better future we need instead.

Just like previous waves of innovations, this technological change is disruptive: distorting social order, making new things possible. Naomi Klein⁴ warns how this could be dangerous, with disaster capitalism voraciously feeding on violent disruptions that drive up inequality and used to force through unpopular changes in society, such by arguing for example that automation is inevitable, that there is no alternative to Judgement Day. However, Holeman's cites Polanyi who notes that this first disrupting movement always triggers a second movement: people and organisations wanting to protect the social fabric, giving counter weight to the market forces, developing new ways to regulate them. Here we consider if this counter-movement itself is to become the new normal?

Holemans imagines that such a transformative response could be possible, writing that:

“We strive for a society that can provide people with security so they can freely develop their lives within the boundaries of the planet. For that, we need to change almost everything, so we do not know today how society will look like tomorrow. An example from nature makes it clear how radical such a transition is: the caterpillar that locks itself into a pupa to change into

a different shape and structure. This takes place when ‘imaginal disks’ begin to form and resist the caterpillar’s drive for constant expansion, and restructure the organism to put its energy into creating a butterfly instead⁵. When the pupa opens and the butterfly flies away, the same organism has been transformed into a new way of being”.

So what might these *imaginal cells*, that transform our current forever-more-overconsuming society into a mature society with the ability to sustain itself, be like? Might there be a butterfly effect, where such transformations are replicated at a community level across the UK and create truly transformational change?⁶

2. Plan for the Planet - A Radical Jobs-Led Relocalisation of the Economy

This paper suggests a response that goes beyond addressing those directly affected by automation and austerity. We need a positive vision for the future and a constructive approach such that is shared, and supported, as it is co-created. This will certainly be wider than reconsidering the plight of platform workers, and those employed out of necessity on zero hour contracts. This vision needs to face up to the realities of the already significant climate impacts already locked-in to our future, based on emissions in the past (See Heatley and Read, 2017)⁷.

To avoid the possibility of the worst of climate disasters an overall pathway shift for our economy is required of unprecedented scale. This requires truly transformative adaptation to reduce our climate impact⁸, at a pace of change that leading climate scientist Kevin Anderson (2012)⁹ notes has not been realised in recent times, in terms of societal transitions.

So what might that be like?

Firstly, it will be **planned**, not just within one sector, or in a cluster of places, but as a new pathway for how we will plan, live and flourish within our climate and wider environmental limits. This plan could be akin to the transition of the 1940s, when the Beveridge Report, which led to the setting up of the welfare state and the National Health Service, was part of a wider societal plan which included the establishment of the planning system, through the 1947 Town and Country Planning Act, and a programme to provide affordable homes for all.

Its goal should focus on delivering the needs of society, within the sustainable resources available – reducing economics to the means to deliver this, not the end in itself. This would mean redefining what we understand by development, progress and productivity. We might then recapture the notion of quality of life for all as a goal rather than individually maximising our so-called ‘standard of living’, measured in purely economic terms.



Secondly it will be **truly participatory, including through the jobs created** and how these build stronger connections across local economies, which will further develop and deepen transformations going forward. This could draw on and capture the spirit of the co-operative movement that predated, and surely underpinned the social transition of 1940s Britain. From humble beginnings in Rochdale, one in six people globally are now a member of a co-operative, of one kind or another. What if such collective culture was harnessed to reconnect communities, to rebuild community trust lost at the altar of consumerism?

Thirdly, it will be grounded in **locality**. It must have a sense of place, yet be replicable. So that the one billion plus slum dwellers around the world today can see how it affects their lives too. We need to address inequality in wealth and income, both within and between countries.

3 Why a Green Industrial Strategy is Needed

3.1 To Link to national and global climate change and poverty reduction targets.

At a global level it seems like the world's governments, through the help of the UN agencies, have come together and made some good plans. In the last two years they have: secured a global agreement on climate change in Paris (2015)¹⁰; one on how to make better cities at the Habitat III conference in Quito in Ecuador;¹¹ agreed, in Sendai, Japan,¹² a framework to improve disaster resilience, and agreed on goals to make development sustainable in every country, including the UK.¹³ But if these agreements don't directly affect what happens on the ground what use are they? Unless these international agreements affect the workings of increasingly globalised capitalism then they are just window dressing while business-as-usual decision making goes on, focused on the resilience and profitability of speculative investors and global corporations: not on what is most socially useful or sustainable, now or in the long-term.

There is still a massive disconnect between what is agreed (globally) and what actually happens, how it happens, and who benefits. Currently economics comes first, and social and environmental aspects are typically treated as constraints. Decisions on what to invest in, both by the private and public sector, treat aspects such as air pollution, climate change, land-use and biodiversity impacts and inequality as externalities. With such a market-led approach what happens is not so much planned but a reflection of market forces driving continued specialisation of different community and country's productivity (comparative advantage), reducing the variety of skills and employment in a local area, and increasing the scale at which business and enterprise is able to operate 'successfully'.

This means that spatial planning (what goes where!) is currently a servant of economic planning (which determines who wins, and by how much!).

So what does all this mean for our communities and lifestyles? Plans of how 'development' occurs at the community level in the UK take the form of a Local Development Framework (the plan) produced by each local council. These must provide the number of houses predicted by a methodology set out by government and are expected to also predict and then plan for increases in retail, office and warehouse space. Plans for infrastructure investment tend to be either led by government or by unaccountable Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). These plans are appraised to make sure the environmental sustainability is not too bad but they appear to be completely disconnected to the global aspirations of the international agreements listed above. Rather they are strongly driven by government economic targets, with decisions often made by LEPs, on which business interests dominate. This means that local planning is constrained by economic decisions that mostly disregard social and environmental aspects, of a local, national or global scale.

3.2 To stop increasing the scale of the problem to map out an overall green economic transition.

The UK's built environment is big enough already. Instead of expanding what we have - from runway capacity to waste incinerators - we need to improve our quality of life, but do this within the environment's limits. Shifting towards live-work communities rather than city-to-city commuting is vital if we are to address climate change. It makes no sense to agree a national plan to address climate change while continuing to invest in the type of infrastructure that makes the problem worse.

Consider for example, the UK's current dash for oil and gas, the proposed industrialisation of our countryside through exploitation of unconventional oil and gas through hydraulic fracking and acidisation. John Ashton said "*You can be in favour of fixing the climate. Or you can be in favour of exploiting shale gas. But you can't be in favour of both at the same time.*"¹⁴ Addressing climate change means we must leave 80% of known fossil fuel reserves in the ground. If we are to fix the climate and inequality we need a very different kind of industrial strategy.

Similarly, expansion of transport infrastructure, and aviation capacity in particular, will encourage the displacement of production to the locations around the world where it is cheapest. This is likely to increase the carbon emissions involved in production (through production where social and environmental standards are lower) and in transportation. In contrast, investing in local infrastructure will support more localised production. We need to shift from building high carbon global transport infrastructure to enabling more local public and active transport.



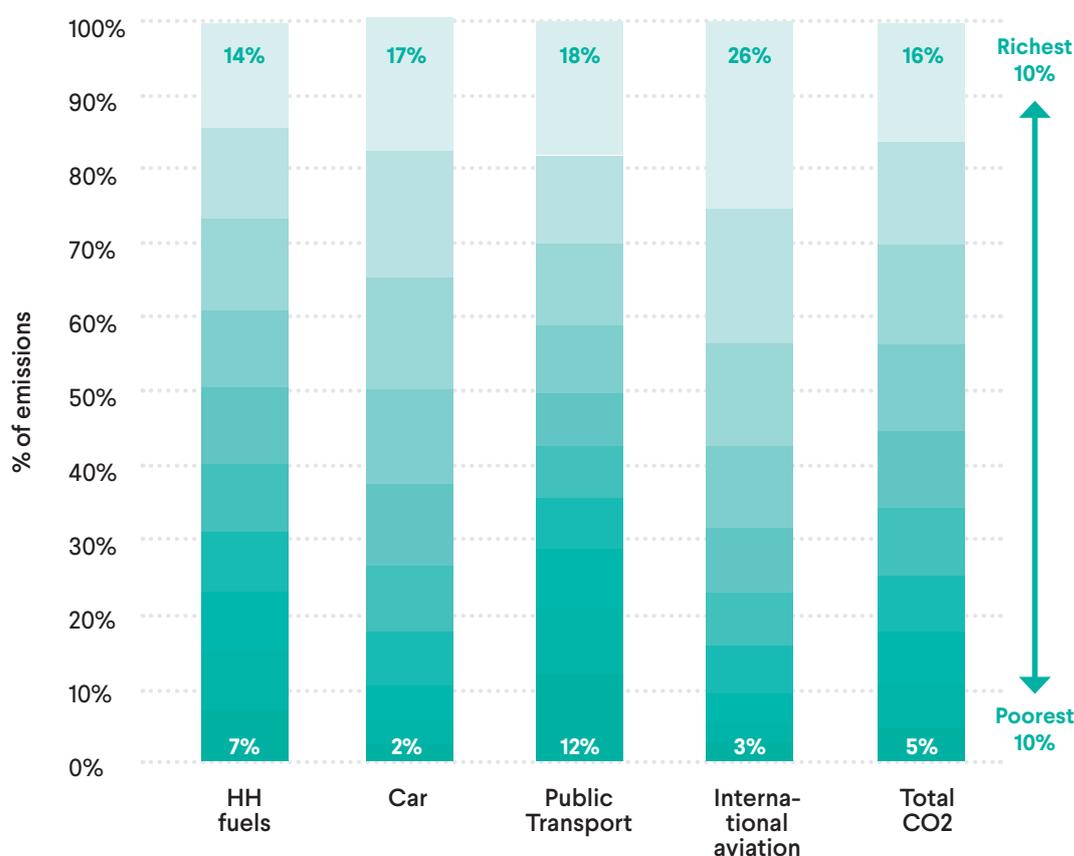
This localisation of transport could be part of an economic plan to stimulate a *radically* lower carbon economy, of more *accessible communities, lower resource and energy use*. What we choose to invest in does impact on how we then choose to live. Infrastructure tends to lock in not just individual behaviours, but the ways that society is organised and works. Instead of continuing to invest in global aviation (and shipping) we could invest in making the UK economy less London-centric and help the many communities left behind, through new employment which drives the green transition. The UK's current economic approach is creating asset price booms and rising house prices where the economy is strong, in particular London and the South East. But those areas also suffer from increasing congestion, resource use and pressure on communities and the local environment. Meanwhile other parts of the UK are starved of employment and vitality. The result is migration for jobs, insecurity, and increasing geographical inequality across the UK. Instead we should create plans for local areas, and the UK as a whole, setting out how socially-useful production can enable a resilient transition to environmentally sustainable living.

3.3 To move from infrastructure and austerity to jobs and sustainable communities

The UK's national budget continues to prolong austerity and insecurity for many, while seeking to address the so-called infrastructure gap. There is persistent inequality¹⁵ and a climate gap: between what the climate scientists say we need to do and what is happening across the UK and globally as we develop, produce and consume ever more. This is reflected in current consumption patterns, as highlighted in Figure 1.

The current approach sees no limits to growth, but backs high-tech industries, increasing automation and new infrastructure. It is not creating a fair or climate resilient future. Delivering national-scale mega projects, such as Hinkley Point power station and the High Speed 2 (HS2) railway which continues to support growth in transport and energy use, is locking-in more carbon emissions and will not provide the decent employment and a balanced economy we need across the UK.

Figure 1: Proportion of household emissions attributed to each disposable income decile by emissions source



Source: JRF (2011) <https://www.jrf.org.uk/report/distribution-uk-household-co2-emissions>



Instead we need to invest in decentralising our economy. This would create far more jobs, through activities that are more people intensive and which could be far less environmentally damaging. This will mean better local plans with different priorities. Instead of providing (mainly unaffordable) housing to further grow the economy where it is already the strongest (London and its commuter belts, and other major cities) we should plan to provide employment where worklessness is greatest – and the affordable homes needed across the UK. There needs to be co-ordination between local plans to achieve this. Instead, housing figures in local plans are based on a government-dictated method for working out local need which reflects market demand, to predict and then provide ever more and expensive housing, and supporting this with new retail and commercial space. Instead, councils should lead in far more actively planning the transition of our economy to a more socially and environmentally sustainable one. This would mean that instead of a national industrial strategy linked to a national infrastructure plan, we need a national spatial plan for employment and localised investment that takes our climate targets as a starting point – and then plan to make that happen. We can choose to take a more plan-led approach: nationally, locally and regionally.

4 What might a Green Industrial and Investment Strategy look like?

4.1 Shift from picking the wrong winners, to planning at a more local scale

The current UK strategy revolves around picking winners – supporting industries where the UK can command comparative advantage at a European or global scale. This is reflected in the UK hosting the EU agencies for pharmaceuticals and banking. The recent announcements for a new industrial strategy highlighted the continuation of this approach – based on expanding exports and global reach in a few key sectors, therefore declaring Heathrow Expansion a key part of the strategy.

But this approach is not sustainable – environmentally or socially. High tech businesses employ fewer people and draw investment away from a transition pathway to a climate resilient, carbon neutral and inclusive British economy. Instead we need to plan for a network of vibrant city-region economies across the UK. Such a combination of city and region is crucial. We need to increasingly invest in more sustainable farming, energy generation, resource use and waste management – all of which will result in new jobs spread across the UK. Such an industrial strategy will help to rebalance the economy by reducing the concentration of employment, wealth and incomes in London and the South East.

4.2 Redefining Productivity

Currently the government defines productivity per hour for workers. But this ignores the lost productivity of those not in work – not just those seeking employment but those who would like more employment, or have opted out of employment entirely for reasons such as ill-health or because jobs are not created where families are located. The current definition of productivity also ignores the value of unpaid work – domestic chores, caring for those young and old.

Industrial productivity, as currently defined, will not deliver a better future. The goal of increasing productivity per hour for those in work could lead to growth of robotisation and automation. Also, from an ecological perspective, while labour is taxed and energy and resources subsidised, the dash for ‘productive’ growth could increase resource and energy use; scale and throughput; and the resulting pollution including greenhouse gas emissions.

4.3 Plan-Led: Relinking housing and livelihoods, Sustainability and Security

For shared social and environmental commitments to frame the way our economy develops, our decisions should be collective ones. This means a publically accountable, plan-led approach to development is needed, as well as a parallel increase in the accountability and transparency of corporate decision making.

Unfortunately, regional plans in England were abolished in 2010 and in 2012 the national planning framework was moved away from a plan-led approach. A new approach should reconnect the planning of housing (done locally) to industrial strategy and job creation, public health and security, as was the case with the delivery of the recommendations of the Beveridge Report in 1946 and establishment of the Town and County Planning Act in 1947¹⁶. The overall political programme of the 1940s not only increased public sector employment across the UK and secured the right to genuinely affordable homes across the UK, but planned the generation of (mainly public sector) employment in locations that reduced inequality across the UK. A similar transformation is required today, that addresses the challenges of our times.

Such a national climate, industrial and jobs plan is needed not just in the UK but worldwide, as an alternative to increasingly capital-centric growth. Climate jobs will improve the distribution of jobs across the UK, including in rural areas. This would be a clear alternative to the current government plan which is directing more housing to where economic demand is strongest, and centring investment around London and a small number of other major cities.



5. New Economic Foundations

5.1 From multipliers to connections

Economists often refer to multiplier effects – the value of infrastructure is justified by its knock-on impacts. But what if this is locking in *bad* growth not leveraging a *better* economy? Currently economic growth is leading to real physical (infrastructure and built environment) increases in how much we build and buy – which makes it especially difficult to simultaneously reduce how much resources and energy we spend. Dealing with climate change, equality and resource constraints requires a different approach.

Research by the New Economics Foundation has shown how local employment generation also has a multiplier effect: where a high street shop is locally owned and embedded in the local economy every job is worth three people's worth of livelihood locally¹⁷. The same can be true of production, where the supply chain is drawn from across a community, and its rural hinterland. That was the model of production that often existed in the past – with high street greengrocers supporting glass houses behind, and the high street being the original places where suits were re-tailored (the origin of the word 'retail') together with where many other products and services made and offered locally (as well as some from further afield!) were traded. Thus local production used to sit at the heart of local communities.

There are two different approaches to investing into the economy: through increasing capital (e.g. infrastructure) or by generating employment. Focusing on the former, can lead to higher productivity in terms of economic throughput for each person working – but this can be matched by a reduction in the employment rate, and increased energy and resource use – changing the economy in ways that increase inequality and environmental impact. In contrast, focusing on more employment intensive activities (such as reuse and high quality recycling, rather than crushing and burning waste – or on insulating homes and decentralised renewable energy networks, rather than centralised power generation) can help strengthen community connections, and enable the shift to ways of living that are within climate and environmental limits.

The latter approach to investment will produce different outcomes: production for genuine need rather than production for profit:

- ▶ Firstly, **smaller scale**, more locally based capital (and employment) investment will create vibrancy in the local as opposed to global economy.
- ▶ Secondly, **more employment intensive** investment that increases rather than reduces employment intensity can increase the share of wages as opposed to other income in the economy, which will increase equality.

- ▶ Thirdly, increasing employment intensive, locally based activities can **reduce the 'embodied carbon'** in production and consumption – aiding the shift to sustainable communities.

In all towns, there are such jobs and enterprises already that magnify local vibrancy, rather than lock-in unsustainable centralisation of the economy. These enterprises, being more locally focused, are often, linked to each other, and maybe co-located. As well as businesses these will include voluntary organisations, clubs, networks, societies, charities and trusts, social enterprises, co-operatives, locally owned and independently run businesses and community benefit companies (CICs); and initiatives led or hosted by local authorities, schools, housing providers and the NHS, as well as the projects and activities delivered by these and a myriad of other organisations.

In some cases these organisations mesh with the mainstream economy – like in the US where Habitat for Humanity Re-Stores sell salvaged goods for repair and refurbishment of homes and are a significant part of the DIY market. Such initiatives, have demonstrated increased resilience. For example, the Mondragon cooperative in the Basque country in northern Spain has contributed to shielding this region's economy from much of the employment impact of Europe's recent financial crisis. Such organisations will also work with the public sector to provide the social safety net for people who are homeless, abused, and in need of care, an activity often outside what economics view as 'the economy'. Such caring and voluntary work, whether within families or across communities, reflect a hidden depth to local economies. This is not reported in economist's balance sheets but reflected in social capital, in levels of trust and community resilience. The depth and coverage of these organisations, as well as differences in culture and family ties vary tremendously from place to place. Some local differences reflect character and local identity, whilst others deprivation and vulnerability – where more economic activity, both within the reported and this hidden social economy, is needed.

5.2 New Engines of Growth: People

The key driver for change in the industrial revolution was initially the steam engine, and later the combustion *engine*. The new green foundational economy described here proposes a far more nimble re-engineering of society. This is perhaps better reflected by the French word for an engineer: *ingenieur*. Ingenuity is needed to enable a *just transition* from high carbon industries. Engines were initially deployed to harness the multiplier effects of industrial automation, and replace human labour with fossil fuel energy slaves of machines.



We need to deploy different ‘multipliers’ in our economy by working together in ways where the whole is more than the sum of the parts. This means different ways of connecting different aspects of the economy together, rewiring society and the built environment to become a more ecological economy. Doing so requires us to harness what Katy Anderson, of the Cym Harry community enterprise in Wales describes as, “*the collective intelligence of communities*”.

Currently entrepreneurship is often thought of as a process of securing intellectual property, piloting, exploiting and scaling up an innovation to capture market share. It is often led by finance and intellect. Manual and semi-skilled work is separated from this process of innovation and industrialisation: just supplying workforce, if this cannot be automated. This separation of intellect from delivery is reflected in the distribution of work across the UK. Increasingly there is an economic divide between London and the rest of the UK, and between urban and more rural and remote areas. At the same time there is an all-time disparity between the wages of CEOs and manual workers, and a lesser gap between white and blue collar workers. Caring jobs are often left out of an ‘industrial strategy’, considering this as a service sector, not a driver for vitality in the economy.

A green industrial strategy will change this. Green collar startups will combine the need for manual work, intellect to create change imaginatively, while ensuring change is people-centred so culture is transformed: head, hands and heart. Transitioning the UK economy to be a green economy must happen everywhere, not just in London, major cities and growth points. The creation of a circular economy will integrate production and re-production as reuse, repurposing, and retail (which originates from the French for ‘re-tailoring’) will re-unite the service and productive sectors. Regional and sub-regional investment in energy, sustainable (organic) farming and resource production will re-invigorate the rural economy.

And the way the economy is structured will change. Instead of being connected at a global scale, key economic connections and decisions will increasingly be made nationally, regionally and locally. Co-production and community-scale integration will replace comparative advantage and vertical and horizontal integration at a global scale within sectors. And rather than scaling up, businesses will grow through replication. It is likely that the boundaries between public and private will be blurred, with more new enterprises being cooperatives, social franchises or similar hybrid structures – where workers and other stakeholders have a greater stake and participation in decision making and benefits.

5.3 Green Jobs: Investing in a new people-intensive infrastructure to transition the economy

This proposes a completely different approach to current economic strategies focused on investing in infrastructure to create economic growth. And it will reverse the spatial focus. Instead of building more homes where the economy is strongest, the plan will instead first focus on where there is a shortage of decent jobs.

This would require local planning done by councils and economic planning by Local Enterprise Partnerships to come together. This would extend the notion of a ‘needs budget’ for a local council to maintain vibrant communities through services such as youth centres, libraries, social care, public health (healthy living services) and welfare support to what plans would need to look like to reflect the local delivery of global and national commitments including on climate change, cutting wastefulness and improving biodiversity. Such local plans, made by local people, by setting out what new jobs are needed and where they are to be located would strengthen the links to these global goals and shared commitments. There are many ways in which this could be realised.

The potential to create the green jobs needed to meet climate and environmental targets can be estimated and planned - but will be different for each local area or region, as set out by Peter Sims and Jonathan Essex (2017)¹⁸ (see Box 1 below) who explored how much new employment is required to underpin the transition to a zero waste, 100% renewable, sustainable economy for the Isle of Wight. This highlighted the potential new jobs across the whole economy and addressed seasonal and under-employment. It quantified the task in delivering a low energy retrofit to better insulate and repower every home, to establishing a flourishing of reuse and recycling enterprises, organic farming and sustainable forest management and a refocusing on sustainable transport to improve local and sub-regional accessibility, alongside a massive expansion in renewable energy. Clearly much of this change would benefit from national level funding, policy and regulatory change, but much, including land allocation, supporting new entrepreneurs and start-ups, and securing public and private sector investment, would benefit from local leadership.

So, instead of new industrial estates facilitating the automation of our current ways of living, we need a socially-useful re-purposing of what we already have, that cuts across our society and re-energises local economies up and down the country. energy. Clearly much of this change would benefit from national level funding, policy and regulatory change, but much, including land allocation, supporting new entrepreneurs and start-ups, and securing public and private sector investment, would benefit from local leadership. So, instead of new industrial estates facilitating the automation of our current ways of living, we need a socially-useful re-purposing of what we already have, that cuts across our society and re-energises local economies up and down the country.

Colin Crooks (2012)¹⁹ proposed that new jobs should be those that deliver maximum benefit to communities, by locating them in social enterprise zones to *co-produce* one thousand jobs in the thousand places across the UK with intergenerational unemployment resulting from the loss of manufacturing jobs. This will mean communities are transformed from often ‘company towns’, relying on dominant businesses or sectors (the City in London, Boots historically in Nottingham, Gatwick Airport’s jobs for Crawley etc.) to more diversified local economies. These jobs could be planned to create the new foundational green economy needed to underpin the transition to a sustainable future in all locations.



Box 1. The Isle of Wight Green Jobs Report: Planning a New Green Foundation for the Economy.

The aim of this report was to estimate the job creation potential in the foundational economy to enable the transition to meet climate and environment targets by 2030 (see below). To do this it:

- ▶ Focused on jobs that could drive a transition, in the same way that infrastructure can drive growth
- ▶ Focused on primary job sectors only, including related to resource use, reuse and repurposing across the food and farming, waste and energy, built environment improvements and transport sectors. It did not look at the multiplier effect into other (e.g. service sector) jobs as this could lead to double counting. It is therefore a conservative estimate.
- ▶ Did not look at the 'just transition' to change specific industrial sectors to be more sustainable, as these would need sector/organisation specific, rather than location/community specific plans

This aimed to respond to the climate and environmental targets, and the local environmental context.

The Isle of Wight is separated from the mainland so has its own transport network, has significant solar and some on/offshore wind resource, and is host to a large wind turbine manufacturing factory. It has some woodland and farmed areas. It is based on a target for 100% locally produced renewable energy (including for sustainable transport), circular economy and a sustainable rural economy. The amount of renewable energy generation required would be less than the energy currently used because of two main programmes: the transition to a more sustainable transport network and programme to retrofit to improve the energy efficiency of homes, public sector and the wider built environment.

The end result was a plan for the creation of around 2000 new jobs in both the shorter (transition) and longer term. As the Isle of Wight has a relatively low unemployment rate this was focused mainly on improving the livelihood opportunities both of those in employment already (e.g. part time, low paid and seasonal under-employment) as well as those not in employment due to mental health issues. This would also improve local resilience and provide an alternative to the job market impact of automation, austerity and the gig economy.

This could also draw on the example of the Lucas Aerospace Plan in 1976. Lucas Aerospace workers came together with academic researchers to plan how they could redeploy their skills to overcome the threat of redundancy to shift to production of socially useful and environmentally innovative products, as outlined in Box 2 below.

Molly Scott Cato (2013)²⁰ has previously highlighted how building on the idea of the original Lucas Plan could take the form of a government programme that delivers the structural changes to our economy needed to deal with the economic crisis of austerity and climate crisis together. She explores how this requires both an industrial conversion of existing high-carbon and resource intensive industries, alongside the creation of new 'eco-social enterprises'.

Box 2. The Lucas Plan – an Idea whose time has come.

The Lucas Plan set out an inspiring plan for socially-useful production within one company. In the towns where Lucas Aerospace operated when the plan was drafted in the late 1970s, these factories represented not just the livelihoods of the workers, but the life blood of whole communities. So what if the Lucas Plan inspired plans today were not just embedded within individual organisations planning a Just Transition (TUC, 2008) to green jobs, but were a reflection of wider plans to set out a better pathway for the economy as a whole? Such plans of how the productive heart of our economy could be socially useful and environmentally sustainable would not just be alternative, but revolutionary. They would shift our "take, make, break" linear economic model, driven by infrastructure and growth to a truly circular economy, that is socially useful and environmentally sustainable. These local economic plans should be integrated with the Local Planning Frameworks of our councils and linked to the Industrial Strategy of our government. Putting such community-scale green industrial strategies into practice would help transform the politics and economics of today, to bring about a better tomorrow.



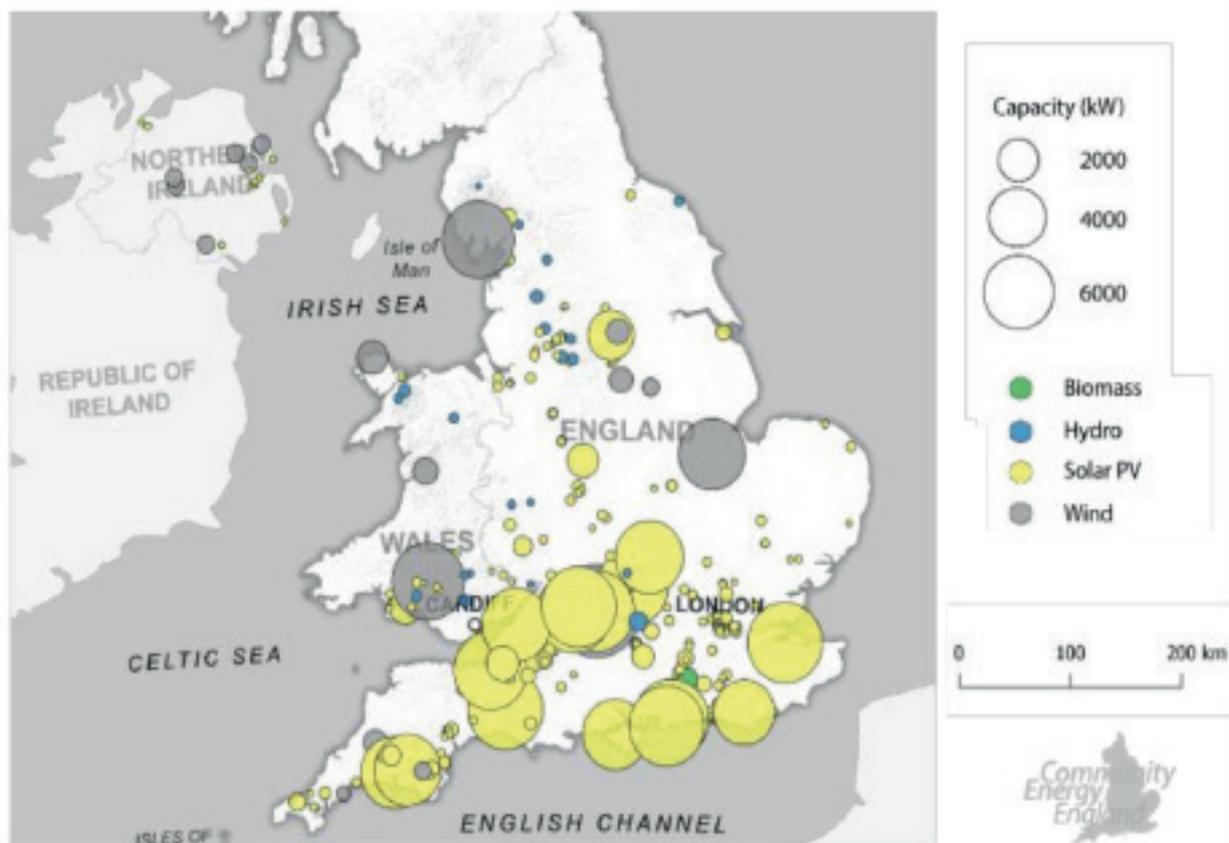
The right support from government, not just in terms of incentives for a *better* economy but through support for more collaborative structures of business ownership could help realise this. Examples such as the tax breaks for appliance repair in Sweden,²¹ subsidy for e-bikes so these now have exceeded 50% of market share in Holland²² and for corporate gift aid for reuse in the USA²³ could accelerate the transition and help recreate the distinctiveness, character and resilience of local communities. New ecological enterprise zones could support this, linking to innovation at universities and serving as drivers for a green transformation. These jobs should be located where they can have maximum impact.

Thankfully we are not starting from scratch. For example, in London in 2016 the Just Space initiative brought together citizens initiatives and community groups from across the capital, to produce an alternative vision and plan for London, reflecting the views of Londoners.²⁴ Such ‘people’s plans’ have great credibility because they have been produced by communities themselves. But how we develop this small but growing undercurrent into a new normal is the challenge of our times.

Similarly, there are a myriad of community initiatives that are already paving the way. Repower Balcombe aims to supply 100% of **Balcombe**’s electricity demand through community owned, locally generated while The Green Valleys is harnessing the power of small streams across the Brecon Beacons national park in Wales. Figure 2 highlights the scale of community energy initiatives already involved in power generation across England and Wales.

Lancaster Co-housing and the Low Impact Living Affordable Community in Leeds demonstrate the potential to provide socially and environmentally sustainable housing in the UK whilst the Kirklees Warm Zone project delivered a 12:1 economic return for its 51,000 home, street-by-street retrofit project. Incredible edible grew from inspirational guerrilla gardening, cultivating waste ground in the Yorkshire village of Todmorden, to being replicated by over 100 local initiatives which take food production back into local hands. Community Supported agriculture initiatives such as at Stroud and Sutton are already delivering a new model of sustainable farming, whilst sustainable transport initiatives like the Bristol Bike project are becoming more commonplace.

Figure 3.6: Map of active community energy generation projects identified by scale and technology type



Source: Community Energy England (2017) https://communityenergyengland.org/files/document/51/1499247266_CommunityEnergy-StateoftheSectorReport.pdf



6. Making it Happen, with Hope

The aim of a plan should be to help develop ways of participation. We need to embed actions in plans that allow us to seek the best response out of the climate and ecological, social and economic crisis in which we find ourselves. Foster (2017)²⁵ explores deep hope in the context of climate change. He considers that while some climate disasters are now inevitable, absolute climate catastrophe is not. And in that space between increasing climate disaster and utter catastrophe, there is space for a deep (as opposed to blind) hope. Similarly, Rebecca Solnit (2005)²⁶ challenges us to ground ourselves, so that our hope is authentic. This *“Requires clarity – seeing the troubles in this world – and imagination, seeing what might lie beyond these situations, that are perhaps not inevitable or immutable.”* Such hope, connected to a vision and focused into a plan of what we can do, with whom and when, can corral the collective energy for us to act.

This action will reduce risk, freeing us up to live, supported through measures such as a citizens’ income as well as the new livelihood opportunities created. Security will be through stronger social ties, as well as the ability to sustain our environment. The risk of investments will be reduced with the full risk of ‘business as usual’ speculation, exploitation and obsolescence considered, and public policy and incentives making sustainable investments more attractive.

To make it happen we need to consciously plan for alternatives, which will vary from place to place. This means that while we agree on the vision and targets (globally, nationally) the way this looks – what is needed, desired and best – will vary from place to place. This needs a locally-led approach to deliver the transformation of local economies,

which will reduce the need for national scale infrastructure investments. This will shift investment from the capital and infrastructure that connects the UK to global markets to that which increases the circularity, resilience and sustainability of local economies.

Coupling locally coherent spatial plans and nationally supported green investment strategies could lead to a realignment of power from centralised city economies to transition towns and more vibrant rural economies. It will be driven not by new car-creating infrastructure and building new houses and warehouse workplaces where the economy is already strongest, but by creating jobs where the homes already are that transition us to ways in which we all can live better quality lives.

We must make do and mend our economy – as the current plans aren’t fit for purpose. But to do that we could start locally, and take back control of our economy, and how it is planned. We could start by setting out and agreeing local visions and action plans as to how we can bring about socially-usefully and sufficiently (environmentally) sustainable transitions of our local areas, down to the neighbourhood, the community level. To deal with climate change these plans must be transformational, adaptive and implemented as the plans are being written, as a learning process.

Together these plans could be joined-up through a new national spatial plan and employment and enterprise strategy, and therefore economic strategy for the UK. In such a way we can take back control of our politics and economics, in ways that are socially useful, future-proof and engender hope.



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