

Institute for Public Policy Research



**TEES VALLEY AND  
COUNTY DURHAM  
CLIMATE AND  
FAIRNESS PANEL  
FINAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

**IPPR and the Tees Valley and  
County Durham Climate  
and Fairness Panel**

February 2021

## ABOUT THE ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE COMMISSION

The Tees Valley and County Durham Climate and Fairness Panel was organised by the IPPR Environmental Justice Commission.

The recommendations of the panel will be presented to local politicians and decision-makers and submitted to the major national cross-party commission, as part of a more detailed report on the process the panel has gone through.

The Environmental Justice Commission was created in 2019 with the aim of working with people across the UK to develop policies and ideas that will tackle the climate crisis and restore nature as quickly and fairly as possible, and that put people and fairness at the heart of the response to the climate and nature emergencies. The commission is co-chaired by Hilary Benn MP, Laura Sandys and Caroline Lucas MP, leading politicians from the Labour, Conservative and Green Parties.

## ABOUT IPPR

**IPPR, the Institute for Public Policy Research**, is the UK's leading progressive think tank. We are an independent charitable organisation with our main offices in London. IPPR North, IPPR's dedicated think tank for the North of England, operates out of offices in Manchester and Newcastle, and IPPR Scotland, our dedicated think tank for Scotland, is based in Edinburgh.

Our purpose is to conduct and promote research into, and the education of the public in, the economic, social and political sciences, science and technology, the voluntary sector and social enterprise, public services, and industry and commerce.

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The progressive policy think tank

# ABOUT THE PANEL

The Tees Valley and County Durham Climate and Fairness Panel was commissioned by the Environmental Justice Commission to examine the question:

*“What practical steps should we take together in the Tees Valley and County Durham to address the climate crisis and restore nature in a way that is fair for everyone?”*

23 residents of Tees Valley and County Durham came together online for over 20 hours of deliberation across eight sessions over six weeks. Collectively, they were representative of the area in terms of age, ethnicity, gender, locale (rural/urban), qualification level, and attitude to climate change.

They heard from a range of speakers providing a grounding in the climate and nature emergencies, the local context, and positive, ambitious proposals for action across four topics: ‘work and industry’, ‘nature, what we eat and how we use the land’, ‘how we make decisions’, and ‘fairly sharing the costs’. The panel also developed their own ‘wellbeing framework’ to help guide their recommendations.

These recommendations are presented here in the panel’s own words.

# STATEMENT FROM THE JURORS: A FAIR RESPONSE TO THE CLIMATE AND NATURE EMERGENCIES<sup>1</sup>

We believe that a fair response to the climate and nature emergencies in Tees Valley and County Durham must protect wildlife and ensure we have a planet where people and nature can thrive.

It must be swift and decisive, clear, and consistent. It has to educate, inspire and involve people in the change required.

There has to be lifelong learning about climate and nature – starting in school and then within communities.

People need to feel ownership of the action taken and committed to what comes next. The action we take has to be a beneficial change in people's lives - it is something they want to be involved in, and will improve their lives. We need young people to be educated in these issues as they will be most affected.

We need to recognise that action will take money. This needs to be provided for the long term and be strategic – government commitment can't be taken away.

Businesses and investors need to be part of the solution. Where they aren't willing to act in the way that's needed, they need to be regulated. They need to be incentivised to act, but there needs to be penalties if they don't.

No one can be left out. A fair response to the climate and nature emergencies needs to increase equality in society. Local people need to be empowered to act. Every area is unique and a 'one size fits all' approach isn't going to work. Local areas need to create their own plans and priorities based on their local assets. They will need the resources to see these plans through.

The cost of acting now is much less than the cost of inaction, both in the UK and worldwide.



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<sup>1</sup> A small group of volunteer jurors worked with an IPPR facilitator to write this statement on fairness on behalf of the jury. All jurors had considered their individual views on 'fairness' and all ideas were discussed by the full group ahead of drafting this statement, which was approved by the whole jury, with no amendments made.

## THE JURORS' WELLBEING FRAMEWORK

We believe in a better life for all in Tees Valley and County Durham.

This means a future where everyone:



We believe that good physical and mental health is a foundation for other principles. In turn, many principles are connected and support each other.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MAKING DECISIONS

### THE JURORS' OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

- Citizens must be involved in decision-making.
- Different voices need to be heard and brought together, and it takes a proactive approach to ensure this happens.
- We need non-partisan coordination across all different levels/types of decision makers. The climate and nature emergencies are too important to be made party political. We need a joined-up, collaborative approach if we are to see the scale of change required.
- There should be a greater dissemination of power at a local level, so that communities are invested with more power to take action on the things that matter to them.
- We should be learning from what is already out there. There are great examples of community-led decision-making and there are examples (such as parish councils) where we can learn from what doesn't work as well.

### THE JURORS' RECOMMENDATIONS

1. There should be citizens' juries in all local areas informing decision-making. These should be funded by central government. Funding should also be available for community groups to support action on the recommendations coming out of these juries.
2. Government and businesses should proactively share clear, understandable information with the public, to help us make green, fair decisions. There should be public information campaigns about the climate and nature emergencies, tailored to the local area.
3. There should be more community ownership of local assets, so that citizens have more control over and a greater stake in the decisions that affect them.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FAIRLY SHARING THE COSTS

### THE JURORS' OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

- Those who can afford it should pay the most, whether that be individuals or companies.
- Wherever possible, public investment should seek to address the climate and nature crises, both at home and abroad. But this should not come at the expense of those most in need, whether at home or in terms of humanitarian aid abroad. Investment should not go to projects that make the problem worse.
- Where possible, green funding should be ring-fenced.
- Funding and resources should be allocated to be spent locally wherever possible.
- Government should seek to make investment as soon as possible. The government leading the way on investments means that individuals, communities and businesses are more likely to follow, rather than having to take the risks themselves of starting something new.

## THE JURORS' RECOMMENDATIONS

4. Companies must pay their fair share. This includes:
  - ensuring companies pay a fair share of taxation on profits and assets in the UK
  - minimising mechanisms which allow companies to move funds abroad or avoid taxation
  - those companies responsible for developments, from housing to commercial, must contribute financially to tackling the climate and nature crises in that area.
5. If the government has to raise taxation then it must be 'progressive' (increasing percentage of tax with increasing income or wealth) income and wealth taxation, reducing loopholes wherever possible.
6. Carbon taxation should be introduced but it should be incremental and targeted at those with the worst environmental impacts, such as the biggest carbon emitters. This money should go exclusively towards tackling the climate and nature crises.
7. Government at all levels should use green bonds to help raise finance for investment. These bonds must be available for ordinary people to invest in and benefit from, not just big businesses. It should also be done on a local basis wherever possible, giving people a say over how it is invested in their local area, on the things that matter to the community. Where bonds are issued locally, then central government should consider matching the investment pound for pound.
8. The UK should increase the amount it is spending to address the climate and nature crises. This should increase above the two per cent of GDP proposed by many. Where the government is investing, it should ensure any grants or investment are widely available and can benefit everyone. The government should make an annual long-term commitment on how much it intends to invest in tackling the climate and nature crises.
9. The National Lottery should increase the share of charitable funds that goes on green issues. The government should consider introducing a new 'Green Lottery' where all charitable funds go to climate and nature issues.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR WORK AND INDUSTRY

### THE JURORS' RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

The following recommendations are ordered according to the level of priority given to them by the jurors as part of a final vote.

10. Raise taxes on high carbon industries to be ring-fenced locally, this must be done carefully to ensure it is fair and doesn't 'offshore' the problem.
11. Create a national blueprint for low carbon work, with scope to amend this strategy locally and in response to the evolving context. Diverse groups should be represented in creating this strategy. The strategy:
  - must be tailored to local circumstances; it can't be decided at a national level, though it should be guided nationally
  - must have a clear division of responsibilities between local, regional and national government

- should have a national body (with local/regional voices) to map what is needed/produced in different regions, and to allocate resources accordingly.
12. Give local areas more control over education, to target education at nature and low-carbon industries in those areas, and raise awareness and aspiration through the national curriculum, awards and scholarships. Specific ideas for this include:
    - creating an 'Attenborough Scholarship' – a scholarship scheme to encourage young people into low carbon jobs
    - or, similar to the Duke of Edinburgh Award, an 'Attenborough Award', starting at primary school level
    - creating a 'National Nature Service' to provide work and volunteering opportunities.
  13. Provide quality lifelong learning from apprenticeships to retraining. Create better apprenticeship schemes and well-resourced retraining with good communications, providing a lifelong training plan.
  14. Raise the national living wage.
  15. Provide a green job wage guarantee and income tax relief for those in low carbon sectors, being mindful of implementing this in a fair way.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL**

**The following recommendations are ordered according to the level of priority given to them by the jurors as part of a final vote**

16. Prioritise producing clean energy jobs and greener industrial practices. For Tees Valley and County Durham, this will mean focussing on the industries where we have the most knowledge, expertise, and assets. This should include:
  - a local industrial strategy which focuses on the resources, knowledge and expertise of the local area
  - investing in opportunities like hydrogen, infrastructure for heating water in mine shafts for homes and renewables. Companies should be encouraged to issue green bonds to support these opportunities
  - supporting the manufacture of goods for the low carbon economy within Tees Valley and County Durham
  - using disused land in the area as sites for renewables, such as wind and solar. This should include encouraging companies and private landowners to use their land for such projects
  - priority should be placed on encouraging community, cooperative, and worker ownership, as part of all projects. These might include community or cooperative energy projects
17. There must be support for education, re-skilling and re-training for workers in existing industries and older people more generally. This must include:
  - the creation of a specific programme for existing workers and older people (similar to apprenticeships) open to people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities
  - retraining must be paid at a good wage to support those going through it



- a good wage for those workers in the new jobs to be able to support them and their families
  - the freedom to choose the type of work to move into
  - ongoing training and education should be provided to reflect changing circumstances and as industries evolve.
18. There should be local policymaking panels inclusive of local government, industry, workers, and unions and public representatives.
19. Investment in carbon capture storage (CCS) should take place only where it is essential for industries like chemical processing. CCS cannot be used to delay action on cutting emissions more generally nor should it be considered as a long-term solution. Information must be provided about the use and potential risks of CCS, and this must be accompanied by strong reassurances and guarantees around safety and endorsed by the Health and Safety Executive (or appropriate body).<sup>1</sup>
20. There should be requirements and incentives to create apprenticeships for young people and existing workers in the local area. This should mean:
- guarantees that apprenticeships can be completed and not ended early
  - providing a realistic prospect of a good job at the end of the apprenticeship
  - requirements and incentives for companies to take on apprentices
  - apprenticeships should be open to young people and existing workers
  - apprenticeships should be open to people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities.
21. There should be provision of education focussed on the local area. This could be coordinated by the combined authority, county council, and local councils in concert with local education authorities. Local groups like scouting and guiding groups, youth clubs, and others should also be involved in this process.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NATURE, WHAT WE EAT AND HOW WE USE THE LAND

### THE JURORS' RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

#### Overarching principles

- Make it accessible for everyone – disabled people, convalescing Covid patients, older and younger generations.
- Involve all parts of society. Bring everyone on board including companies. We should take natural resources as seriously as human resources.
- Educate people on their responsibilities as well as rights.
- Take strict action on extremely harmful practices (like aerosols in the past).
- Amplify at the national level: build on existing positive activities already happening at local level.

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<sup>1</sup> Note: 43 per cent of the jurors did not support the principle of investing in carbon capture and storage.

## Recommendations

The following recommendations are ordered according to the level of priority given to them by the jurors as part of a final vote.

22. Protect green spaces and wildlife. We should do this by:
  - legislating to prevent new building on green belts and green spaces (which makes access to green spaces less fair)
  - requiring developers to make a 'net gain' on nature where they're building
  - providing green corridors for nature and maximising unused areas for wildlife such as rooftops
  - restricting activities, such as hunting, that aren't helpful for nature through banning them or increasing the costs through taxation
  - launching a national campaign with coordinated activities to clean up a local area, promoted on social media and celebrated at the national level. Local authorities can provide equipment like litter pickers and dispose of rubbish at the end of the day.
23. Launch a national tree planting campaign. This is more effective and systematic to do as a nation, and people take notice of leadership and authority. A national or local organisation could be established to make it work. Options include:
  - involving unemployed people and young people as both employees and volunteers
  - encouraging farmers to support nature on their land and get existing wildlife trusts involved
  - involving companies to donate tree saplings and wild plants and involve local schools to plant and nurture wildlife, perhaps in derelict areas
  - national companies could fill resource gaps where communities don't have existing local resources. We can incentivise donations by recognising donors through plaques and in newsletters to local businesses.
24. Education about climate and nature from an early age. We need to be educating people in climate and nature from an early age – including an understanding of ecosystems. We can do this by:
  - encouraging schools to participate in outdoor activities and get involved in citizen science monitoring of wildlife
  - inspiring people throughout their lives by encouraging the media to showcase local success stories
  - education on growing, preparing, and composting a plant-rich diet – for example, with school vegetable patches and food technology lessons
  - public education, such as TV ads for the Countryside Code/'Keep Britain Tidy' to reduce risk of excessive/unsustainable recreational use of nature.
25. Enable local, sustainable farming and food networks. We need to make it easy for people to buy simpler, more local food supplies to avoid food miles and support local farmers. We can do this by:
  - national action (financial incentives and skills training for farmers) to incentivise sustainable farming practices, rather than intensive farming
  - making local markets affordable for local producers and communities rather than only supermarkets, and disincentivising international produce, especially when it's less carbon efficient than UK-grown produce, or harms local agriculture
  - ensuring that the meat we eat is high quality and low carbon. We could consider taxing imported and high carbon meat, with funds raised going back to farmers, and we should incentivise buying UK produce as our

standards tend to be higher than elsewhere. We consume too much meat and, to avoid the risk of 'protein poverty', people should be encouraged to eat alternative sources of protein

- making plant-based foods cheaper
- providing information on how much carbon is used to produce and transport foods.

26. Create stricter rules on use and disposal of materials. Ban single-use materials, things should be designed so they don't become waste, but used for something more productive.
27. Give everyone access to nature. Protect local nature areas and make them accessible to all. Provide opportunities and experiences to understand what needs to be done to conserve nature, such as hands-on volunteering. We need to reduce barriers to volunteering in nature and make use of people's skills and qualifications.

## THE JURORS' RECOMMENDATIONS FOR ACTION AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

### Overarching principles

- We need to provide access and opportunity for more people to care for and increase/improve nature.
- We need to provide access and opportunity for people to buy locally and only what they need (this shouldn't be prohibitively expensive, people shouldn't be incentivised to buy more than they need).

### Recommendations

The following recommendations are ordered according to the level of priority given to them by the jurors as part of a final vote.

28. More local control over planning from the community, so that the community has a greater voice in planning decisions. If land is neglected and not developed, then it should transfer into community-ownership.
  - ensure that there are demands on developers to protect nature and reduce carbon emissions (such as green corridors, wildlife gardens, heating and energy production and usage) and timeframes for using land
  - all land should be assessed for the potential opportunities to support nature.
29. Funding for community and education-based projects that protect wildlife and restore nature which provide both local employment and learning experiences for schools and others.
30. More protected land in Tees Valley and County Durham – some of this should be accessible to the public, but some should be 'undisturbed'.
  - council-owned derelict land should be 'rewilded'
  - there are specific industrial sites that could be turned into spaces for nature and community-assets.
31. Subsidise retail space for local growers, including using existing assets in outdoor 'market-places' in town centres.
32. Councils need to be funded to provide better recycling facilities, especially for food-waste at a household level.



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