

Sheffield City Region Mayoral Combined Authority
11 Broad Street West
Sheffield, S1 2BQ

1 December 2020

Dear Green New Deal South Yorkshire,

Re: Open letter on Green Jobs in South Yorkshire

I warmly welcome your call on behalf of several campaigning organisations to make the push for green jobs central to our plans to recover from COVID. That is both Labour's position, and mine. I firmly believe that the extraordinary investment now needed to support the economy in the face of COVID must help transform our economy as part of a Green New Deal, both creating jobs and tackling the enormous threat of climate change.

Our Renewal Action Plan (RAP) shows how we want to apply that principle in South Yorkshire. Like all our work, its three guiding principles are to create a stronger, greener and fairer South Yorkshire. It is the main vehicle through which we are currently bidding and preparing for the extraordinary funding we need for a green transformation.

The RAP includes proposals for £200m of green investment just over a period of 18 months, "to accelerate our transition to Net Zero, while creating jobs, building up our high-value industries, and improving quality of life for our communities." Specific priorities include:

- A substantial programme of building retrofits.
- Supporting green energy projects, including solar, hydrogen, and heat pumps.
- Establishing a £40m carbon challenge fund, to incentivise and leverage private sector investment.
- Enhancements to biodiversity and natural capital.
- Flood prevention works, with a focus on nature-based flood prevention.
- A tree planting programme, closely tied to flood prevention but also to improving neighbourhoods and habitats.

In addition, we propose £53m in investment for active travel and low-traffic neighbourhoods.

Other proposed investments under the RAP would also be aligned with our environmental priorities. For example, proposed support for businesses in the form of loans or grants would be made conditional on organisations committing to deliver wider socio-economic value in the City Region, including environmental sustainability and inclusion. We anticipate the support for training would be coordinated with environmental investments so it would, for example, give people the skills to fill jobs in environmental programmes like housing retrofits.

The challenge is that fully funding the ambitions contained in the RAP depends on central government support. As an example, the amount of funding the government has allocated to building retrofits for the whole country is roughly equivalent to what we would need just to insulate our own stock in South Yorkshire. We continue to press hard for them to take much stronger action, including implementing a Green New Deal. The proposals they unveiled lastweek, while welcome, fall far short of the scale of ambition that we need.

Meanwhile, we have pushed ahead with our own efforts. We declared a climate emergency exactly a year ago, in November 2019, and plan to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2040, ten years ahead of the national target – and we would like to do it sooner. A Net Zero Work Programme will soon be approved outlining the projects that we need to take forward, and in which order, to ensure the rapid progress we need.

The same priorities are also reflected in our Energy Strategy, which we launched in July 2020, and which included input from a wide range of stakeholders, including Sheffield Climate Alliance, Friends of the Earth, and Extinction Rebellion. The Strategy includes plans to ensure no new homes use fossil fuels by 2025, a zero-emission public transport fleet by 2035, and at least five mine water schemes, which use water from former mines to heat nearby homes and communities, by 2040.

It also includes ambitions to create 3,500 jobs and training opportunities in the low carbon and renewable energy sector, and to cut car miles by a quarter – a goal supported by a separate plan from our Active Travel Commissioner Dame Sarah Storey to create more than 1000km of cycling and walking routes in the region over the next 20 years.

Other actions include:

- Investments of £21.6m in zero-carbon active travel infrastructure since 2018, with much more planned.
- We have secured £2.6m towards installing EV charging points over the next 18 months, and our ongoing bus review is considering options for using zero emission vehicles.
- The application process for the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery scheme (Phases 1b and 2) is currently ongoing, and our Local Authorities are applying to the Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund and the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. These funds will help with retrofits and other activities to reduce carbon emissions from buildings. Doncaster and Barnsley were recently allocated a £600,000 Green Homes Grant to retrofit dwellings over the next 6 months.
- Through a South Yorkshire Hydrogen Network that we set up with Arup, we are working with partners to identify opportunities for hydrogen energy across South Yorkshire.
- We plan to develop heat pump schemes, and are drafting a Mine Energy White Paper alongside the North East LEP and other partners. We are currently assessing the properties of the mine water resource at Elsecar Heritage Centre which could be used as a heat source on site. We are also installing air source heat pumps in the AMP Technology Centre.
- We have strongly supported plans to plant a Northern Forest, and a Woodland Creation Officer will be joining the MCA (working with the Local Nature Partnership and other partners) in December. I have tabled an amendment to the Environment Bill requiring the government to give a legislative basis to targets for tree planting across England.
- We have proposed a £271m flood prevention plan that lays the groundwork for nature-based flood prevention. We've made a strong call for Natural Flood Management to be at the core of national flood prevention measures.

I hope it is clear from this that we see environmental and climate change issues as a key priority. The scale of the climate crisis clearly demands radical action, and I am, of course, always open to suggestions about how we can improve our response.

We can and must go further, even if some of the most ambitious measures we would like to take depend on national policy decisions. I look forward to working with you and other stakeholders to do that.

Thank you for your letter.

With, my very best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Dan', followed by a long, straight horizontal line.

Dan Jarvis MBE MP

Mayor, Sheffield City Region Mayoral Combined Authority