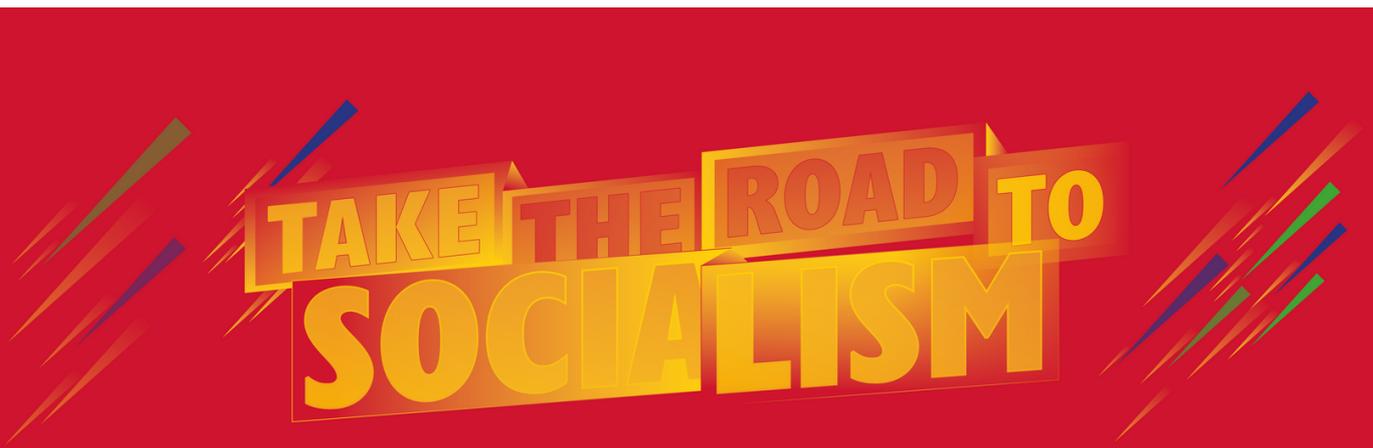


Communist Party
ENVIRONMENT
Commission Briefing

REPORT OF THE CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITTEE JULY 2022

JULY 2022



**TAKE THE ROAD TO
SOCIALISM**

WHILE THE TORIES FIDDLE, THE WORLD BURNS: COMMUNIST PARTY OF BRITAIN ENVIRONMENT COMMISSION STATEMENT ON THE REPORT OF THE CLIMATE CHANGE COMMITTEE JULY 2022

It has long been apparent that the current Tory administration has no vision for the country, nor, other than three-word sloganeering, any policies or strategies to address the many crises currently facing those in whose interests they are supposed to govern. With Johnson packing his bags, the signs from many of those seeking to replace him as prime minister are that environmental issues and specifically the UK's net zero commitments are to be sacrificed on the high altar of Tory fundamentalism.

It is no surprise therefore, Britain's Communists say, that the latest report of the UK's Climate Change Committee (CCC) echoes for Britain what the recent report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) said about the world – that not enough is being done to meet commitments on reducing harmful emissions as part of the global effort to restrict and reverse the dangerous rise in the earth's temperature.

The CCC is an independent statutory body established under the Climate Change Act 2008 to advise the UK and devolved governments on emissions and targets for their reduction. It reports to Parliament on progress in reducing greenhouse gases and adapting to the impacts of climate change. Its chair is Lord Deben – better known to many as former Tory minister John Selwyn Gummer.

The report credits the UK as a world leader in terms of ambition. Unlike in many countries, the UK governments does have a net zero strategy, having committed to a 68% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030, 78% by 2035 and net zero by 2050, but as Lord Deben said in his presentation of the report, those commitments must be turned into reality and, as both he and the report say, there are 'serious gaps across the board' where the government does not have the necessary or adequate strategies and policies to deliver the reductions in emissions needed to meet its climate commitments.

Key points in the report are;

- There are serious gaps in the implementation of the UK government's net zero strategy
- Tangible progress on the strategy 'lags behind ambition' – not all policies will deliver as planned
- Action to address the rising cost of living must be aligned to the net zero strategy. There is an urgent need for equivalent action both to reduce fossil fuel use and to limit energy bills
- There is slow progress on 'wider enablers' – the wider structural and policy changes which will allow transition. The report says that there are 'plenty of warm words, but little concrete progress'
- The UK must build on the COP 26 pledges

The bull point of the report is that Britain's net zero pledges lack credibility without a strategy to implement them. This absence of substance to back government announcements of policy will be familiar to even the most passing student of the Johnson administration. The gaps are many and serious;

- There is not enough to reduce consumer demand for high-carbon activities
- The current cost of living crisis is a golden opportunity to encourage de-carbonisation
- There is an urgent need for a public engagement strategy – there is public concern, but low awareness of how, individually and collectively to contribute
- Integration of net zero and climate adaptation is ‘largely missing’ from key government policies such as ‘levelling up’
- There is not enough accountability
- There is no DEFRA policy on agricultural emissions
- Too little action on new skills to meet the needs of new low carbon ‘markets’
- Reliance on aviation – no policy to mitigate its use
- Too little building adaptation – especially insulation. Newly built houses are having to be retro-fitted to become energy efficient
- Government proposals for market-based solutions – eg; obligations on manufacturers to sell a rising number of heat pumps and relying on the market to drive other deliveries are untested
- Some adaptation methods such as carbon sequestration in peatlands and woodlands are themselves at risk from climate change effects such as flooding, drought and fire.

Mentions of markets and ‘market-based solutions’ in the CCC report will not escape the notice of readers and will come perhaps as no surprise in a report from a body led by an ex-Tory government minister. Many of the issues on which the government is failing, for example aviation, house building and the training of workers in new skills are inextricably linked to the demands of big business and the low wage, high profit profile of the government economic model – in other words the capitalist view of environmental action is firstly to minimise the problem and then to shoehorn solutions into Business as Usual.

Communists say that proposing profit-friendly environmental action and expecting big business to adapt to climate-friendly practices is both to expect the impossible and to ignore the urgency of the problem. We have seen in recent days how quickly the government will abandon the pretence of acting decisively on reducing fossil fuel use in using world events to justify its decision to extend the working life of the coal power plant at West Burton and its on-going negotiation on two more. We see Tory back bench pressure from the Net Zero Scrutiny Group to (in the words of former Prime Minister David Cameron) ‘cut the Green Crap’

The UK government is failing to act to meet its net zero commitments, but even these commitments fail to grasp the point. Capitalist business as usual, with its drivers of accumulation and profit cannot deliver meaningful environmental action, the only alternatives are socialism or extinction.