

Strategy 2015-18

Creating a greener Britain

**“green
alliance...”**

New
leadership

Better
policy

Strong
analysis

Powerful
alliances



1979-2014

Celebrating 35 years of shaping
British environmental politics

Green Alliance is a charity, independent think tank and advocate, working in a responsive way in a complex political environment. We are guided by our mission to maximise the UK's contribution to an environmentally sustainable world.

We believe that pluralist politics, informed by strong analysis, dialogue and public participation creates better policy, and is a powerful route to a greener future and better lives. Active leadership from politics, civil society and business can accelerate this process by ensuring that it is fair, articulates a shared goal and creates a durable investment environment.

The conviction that better lives and a better future can only be achieved by respecting the value and constraints of the natural environment is the defining belief of our staff, trustees and network.

Summary

Good green policy makes Britain healthier and more prosperous.

In this document we set out Green Alliance's strategy to shape change for a greener Britain through better policy, from 2015 to 2018.

It commits us to:

Putting the 'public' back into public policy

People have become divorced from decision making and are disillusioned with representative politics. This has led to weaker policy and lower confidence for businesses which need policy certainty.

We will make the case for structured public engagement that ensures assumptions about future infrastructure needs are tested in public, and the benefits of a greener economy are properly shared.

Cutting edge analysis of how technological and economic change can be harnessed for a greener Britain

Rapid technological, digital and economic change is all around us, presenting both opportunities and challenges for the green agenda.

We will be working with leading businesses and academic thinkers to identify how these changes can be harnessed for better resource use, lower carbon emissions and a higher quality environment.

Broadening our activity to work on the natural environment

Politics isn't responding adequately to the accelerating decline in the health of the natural world.

We will set up a natural environment programme, working with our partners to create a new framework for land management in the UK which supports the regeneration of natural systems and protects food production.

Developing new alliances for public advocacy

Green policy is at risk of becoming sidelined in a tougher political environment.

We will apply our advocacy skills in the public arena and mobilise multiple interests, ensuring their supporters and employees have a voice in the big green policy decisions of the next parliament, such as the future of clean energy generation.

Supporting the next generation of environmental leaders

Young people will be the most affected by short term thinking on the environment, but are given little voice in public debate.

We will nurture and support the new generation of sustainability leaders in business, politics and civil society, and set up a 'next generation council' to give young people a stronger voice in the public debate on sustainability.

Introduction

Why good policy matters



Matthew Spencer
Director

“

Smart green policy is helping to resolve some of Britain's economic and social challenges.”

Policy is our focus at Green Alliance. Not because it's the be all and end all. It can't deliver a better world on its own, but it can create the conditions under which culture, technology and business interact to enhance our lives.

From new industry to international leadership

Smart green policy is helping to resolve some of Britain's economic and social challenges. It generates economic activity in former industrial areas, as is happening in Humberside and Tyneside with the development of the offshore wind industry. It makes UK business more productive, by reducing energy and resource waste. And it improves people's lives, enhancing the quality of their local environment, offering new employment opportunities and reducing the cost of living through greater efficiency.

Good policy also advances Britain's role in the world. After early leadership from the UK, all 28 nations of the EU are now committed to the 2030 emissions reductions pathway created by the UK's Climate Change Act.

UK diplomacy has been central to achieving many major international environmental agreements such as the Montreal Protocol, which has reduced the size of the ozone hole, and the EU Birds Directive, which has been protecting European bird populations for the past three decades.

A changing world

When we were established in 1979 there was one lumbering energy giant, the CEB, supplying Britain's energy, largely from coal. As a result of policy decisions in subsequent decades, things are very different: there are now over half a million homes which supply much of their own electricity from the sun, and the UK's coal use has halved.

In the same period we've had three recessions, knocking billions off the UK's balance sheet, but our economy has still doubled in size. Internet shopping has killed high street names, and created new retail brands. Fragile is the new normal for many businesses as markets evolve fast and habits change, but it is also a time of immense innovation in business systems.

These changes all present possibilities and challenges for the green agenda. The next phase of the digital revolution will bring autonomous cars to the streets of our cities, and robotics and digital printing will open up new manufacturing opportunities for the UK. Driverless cars will need new rules of the road. How will we ensure that technology developers and politicians work together to

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Green Alliance has gone from strength to strength, and has played a pivotal role in working alongside politicians, civil society and business, campaigning for sustainable development and helping to put this agenda front and centre of political debate.”

Chuka Umunna MP

“

Green Alliance's value to a large multinational such as Alstom is clear. Strong thought leadership, helping us to refine our own analysis of a range of long term policy challenges. And always skillfully illuminating the drivers behind political debates that have a major impact on our markets.”

Terence Watson

Country president and
managing director, Alstom

“

We are optimistic about the future. The groundwork has been laid, investment in a greener Britain is increasing in a tough political environment.”

ensure that this new transport is also greener? Will shiny new digital production repeat the old wasteful, linear model of analogue manufacturing, using resources only once, or can we make sure it also leads to greater resource recovery and remanufacture?

Environmental change is often less visible than technological innovation, but the health of natural systems is deteriorating fast. Carbon concentration in the atmosphere hit 400ppm in 2014, a level not seen for three million years, and wildlife is in serious decline in the UK and across the world.

These trends can be stabilised with good public policy that rebalances our economy away from a linear extractive relationship with the environment towards one of resource stewardship. Prosperity based on knowledge and experience is the promise of the digital era, if it can be harnessed to a lower material input, sustainable economy.

The difficulty we face is that, at the same time as the need for more effective policy is growing, public satisfaction with government and politics is falling. This weakens the policy mandate of politicians and can exacerbate short termism. Evidence and ideas are no longer enough. Political renewal is also needed, so that politicians can make decisions that stick. That's why this strategy goes beyond a plan for securing better policy and addresses the need to overcome barriers to better politics.

We are optimistic about the future. The groundwork has been laid, investment in a greener Britain is increasing in a tough political environment, and we are starting to see some of the benefits feed back to our economy. There are some big challenges ahead in the effort to decarbonise, and in addressing our troubled relationship with nature, but many of the technological shifts we are witnessing can help, and the British public is constant in its support for a better environment. We look forward to working with you to build on these foundations and increase Britain's contribution to an environmentally sustainable world.



What do we think is good green policy?



We have been greatly impressed by the ability of Green Alliance to convene both like-minded peers from diverse industries and the key policy makers we need to influence if we want fit-for-business legislation.”

Tracey Rawling Church
Director of brand and reputation, KYOCERA Document Solutions UK

Protecting natural systems

The first priority of good policy should be to stop things getting worse. In an interconnected world this means Britain playing its part to ensure that consumption is not damaging natural systems at home or abroad, and to help other countries to improve their environmental stewardship.

Stronger business investment and innovation

Business needs stable policy to commit finance to new infrastructure, and innovation support to accelerate cost reduction, reduce waste and create new business models with enhanced environmental performance.

Fairer distribution of costs

Policy has to protect the poorest and mitigate the impact on affected businesses in the transition to a greener economy, at the same time as ensuring that costs are not loaded onto younger or future generations.

Better distribution of benefits

More people in the UK should be able to have a stake in a greener economy. New routes to direct green investment for consumers should be opened up, communities should have more control over their environment and incentives for behaviour change.

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What makes Green Alliance exciting to work with is how they balance policy insight with a truly cross party approach. They are the source of many of the most exciting new ideas. Their work on an energy efficiency feed-in tariff took an innovative, pro-market approach to how we boost energy efficiency and led to a trial currently being conducted by DECC.”

Rt Hon Greg Barker MP

Why we want to put the ‘public’ back into public policy

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At a time when those of us who take environmental issues seriously feel like an endangered species, it is a relief that Green Alliance continues to attract a reliably interesting and quality bunch of people to its discussions.”

Camilla Cavendish
Associate editor,
The Sunday Times

The challenges to creating or protecting good policy are profound. People are losing faith in the current model of representative politics as a means of reflecting their concerns.

With lower public support the government finds it harder to create stable policy, and politicians on the defensive sometimes resort to weakening environmental policy to fend off critics. Business and investor confidence declines in the face of this policy uncertainty which can lead to higher costs and fewer public benefits. This only serves to lower public faith in politics further.

If British politics gets stuck in this dynamic then decision making will become shorter term, sustainability leaders in business risk becoming isolated, and the UK's influence and contribution to creating an environmentally sustainable world will decline.

But Green Alliance believes that this trend can be reversed through stronger public engagement which can lead to more stable policy, higher business investment and a greener economy.

One solution is to open up government policy making, testing ideas and assumptions by engaging directly with the public on long term decisions and through greater decentralisation to cities and counties.

There has been real progress in greening the UK economy, but the direct benefits of this, ie energy decarbonisation, lower waste and higher economic productivity, rarely filter down to the public. Another answer is to give citizens a stake in these benefits, through local and household energy generation, via green ISAs and pensions, and by having greater influence over local budgets.

Over the next three years, we will champion these new approaches to opening up policy making and sharing the benefits of a greener economy as part of our contribution to addressing the biggest underlying barrier to better policy: declining faith in parliamentary democracy.

“

I was grateful both in opposition and in government for Green Alliance's sensible, solid but persistent approach to issues like the borrowing powers of the Green Investment Bank, incentives for energy saving, and electricity market reform.”

Chris Huhne, former
secretary of state for energy
and climate

Green Alliance

35 years shaping British environmental politics

1980s

Not long after we were founded in 1979, we urged a 'green race' between the main parties asking "Who will capture the green flag?".

We hosted the first meeting between Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher and environment groups.

Our work in the 80s gave rise to the founding of the National Food Alliance (now Sustain), Wastewatch and the Merlin Ecology Fund.

Work behind the scenes with government in the late 80s helped to secure the first ever white paper on the environment in 1990.

1990s



In the mid-90s we hosted Tony Blair's first green speech as the new leader of the Labour party.

Our series of Greening Government reports highlighted departmental failures in government.

“We picked up the issue of GM before most organisations showed an interest, and went on to stimulate debate on the handling of scientific uncertainty, work that has had lasting impact on GM policy and the politics of scientific advice.”

Julie Hill
Chair, WRAP
Director of Green Alliance
1991-97

A major NGO coalition led by Green Alliance influenced the formation of the Environment Agency.

2000s

Green Alliance's recommendations for a government low carbon policy unit led to the foundation of the Carbon Trust in 2001.

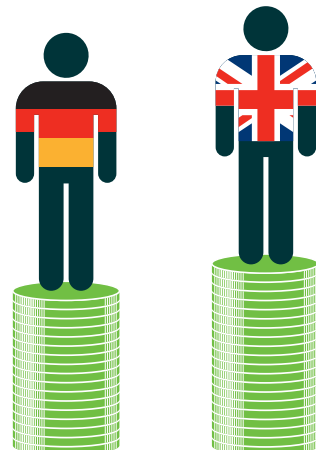
Our work was key to putting clean energy at the heart of the government's 2003 energy white paper.



Just over ten years ago Green Alliance began a careful, deliberate strategy to increase the relevance and impact of environmental analysis on economic policy. We worked with economists to make the case for environmental taxation – which the Treasury accepted, with its 2002 environmental tax strategy.”

Rebecca Willis
Independent researcher
Director of Green Alliance
2001-2004

Great publicity for our research into the growing disconnect between children and the natural world led to all three main parties including commitments to outdoor education in their 2004 manifestos.



2010s so far...



Our work on waste and resources took off in this decade, influencing the Treasury and Defra to increase landfill taxes and invest in recycling.

“We were particularly successful in securing cross party support for carbon capture and storage, a critical technology in the fight to avert catastrophic climate change.”

Stephen Hale
Deputy advocacy and campaign director, Oxfam
Director of Green Alliance
2006-10

Green Alliance co-ordinated the advocacy of NGOs to ensure sustainable development commitments were included in the new 2003 European constitution.

Our work between 2007 and 2010, involving a large coalition of businesses, trade associations and parliamentary bodies, led to the introduction of the Renewable Heat Incentive in 2011.

Green Alliance speeches included Prime Minister Tony Blair, Deputy Prime Minister Gordon Brown, Shadow Chancellor George Osborne, Liberal Democrat leaders Charles Kennedy and Nick Clegg, Foreign Minister David Miliband, DECC minister Ed Miliband, and leaders of the opposition, Michael Howard and David Cameron.

In 2011 our strategic coalition, across business, NGOs and government, built cross party support for the Fourth Carbon Budget in 2011.

Over 60 Labour, Liberal Democrat and Conservative MPs have been informed and inspired on climate change science and policy through our Climate Leadership Programme since 2009.

We made a powerful case for a new public infrastructure bank, which went on to become the Green Investment Bank in 2012, and we brokered its £3 billion capitalisation.



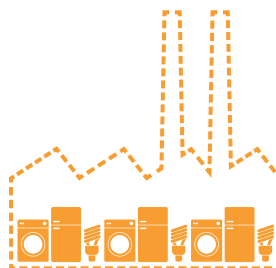
A Green Alliance led business and NGO coalition advocated a power sector decarbonisation target, which has been accepted by the Liberal Democrats and the Labour party.



In 2012 we set up the Circular Economy Task Force. Our recommendations about the barriers to greater resource recovery and the opportunities for new business models are clearly reflected in recent business and political thinking.

In the past four years, Green Alliance speeches have included the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change Ed Davey, Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg, Shadow Chancellor Ed Balls and EU Commissioner Connie Hedegaard.

Our case for a new market for energy saving ('negawatts') has persuaded the government to set up a pilot for electricity demand reduction, to which 300 organisations have applied.



“

It would be hard to overstate the contribution of Green Alliance to environmental policy making. It has helped counter tides of misinformation, influencing the political agenda and building cross-sectoral support for action around environmental concerns. It has proven to be a wonderful connector. Its wealth of top quality research and ideas have been an invaluable resource for myself and many others, and its existence is, in some ways, more important now than ever.”

Caroline Lucas MP

Our strategy 2015-18



Our vision of a greener Britain is of a country which provides a high quality of life for current and future generations; it has a strong economy with no net carbon emissions, an innovative industrial base with low demand for virgin materials and thriving ecosystems, and strong public engagement in decision making.

Our strategy for 2015-18 is to promote and shape strong green policy, ensuring that Britain maximises its contribution to an environmentally sustainable world.

To achieve this, we will:

Strong analysis

Conduct cutting edge analysis of how technological and economic change can be harnessed for a greener Britain

We will apply our expertise and open dialogue to the big questions about how to harness the changes occurring in technology, society and our economy to sustainable ends.

The impact we want to make:

- Our partners and network recognise and understand the impact of technological and economic changes and how to influence them.
- We shape UK expert opinion on priority sustainability solutions.

New leadership

Support the next generation of environmental leaders

Our focus over the next three years will be on the new and young leaders in politics, business and civil society, to help open up decision making and ensure that environmental sustainability is a policy priority.

The impact we want to make:

- We identify and nurture a new generation of sustainability leaders in business, politics and civil society.
- Young leaders have new opportunities to participate in the policy debate around a greener Britain.

Powerful alliances

Build powerful alliances with new business and NGO partners

We will work with broad coalitions of interest focused on stopping the further decline of wildness and ecosystem health, supporting a greener economy, and growing the low carbon and resource recovery business sectors.

The impact we want to make:

- The majority of UK citizens can participate in and benefit from a greener Britain.
- There is strong business investment in green goods and services.

What will be new?

New public engagement in policy making

We will use our established position and relationships to promote the case for greater citizen participation in policy making.

For example:

- Arguing for a less technocratic approach to infrastructure planning, with a stronger role for cities and counties, and a central role for public dialogue around the purpose of new infrastructure.
- Championing policies which lead to the benefits of a greener economy being shared more widely, such as making it easier to invest, encouraging new ownership models and providing new powers to act locally.

We've already made the case for stronger public involvement in Sir John Armit's proposed National Infrastructure Commission. And we are already making the case for a green ISA run by the Green Investment Bank.

Two new areas of analysis

We will do new analysis on the digital economy and ecosystem health to make sense of the drivers and help to formulate smart policy responses.

For example:

- Extending our quantitative research capabilities to the sustainability opportunities and risks of the digital economy.
- Establishing a natural environment programme.

We've already started work with Google on how new software and better design can lead to a circular economy, reducing the environmental impact of smart devices.

New channels for public advocacy

We will be working with our business and NGO networks to develop new public advocacy: multi-year initiatives that will engage a broader range of partners in the big policy decisions which determine the UK's future sustainability.

For example:

- Working with the Circular Economy Task Force to secure a robust government response to resource risk.
- Establishing a coalition focused on expanding the UK's clean energy sector and securing continued growth for the sector into the 2020s and beyond.

New leadership

We will invest in and strengthen the new environmental leadership emerging in politics, business and civil society.

For example:

- Launching a 'next generation council' in 2015 to give young leaders from business and NGOs the chance to explore major green policy issues.
- Nurturing climate leadership in the 2015 new intake of MPs.

Our partners 2011-2014

Over the past three years we have worked with over 70 organisations from business and the third sector to generate new thinking and create a better economy for the UK.



Staff and trustees



Back in the early '90s, Green Alliance's Business Circle was, for me, a revelation. Sitting down informally with peers over a meal and discussing environmental issues with government ministers, their policy advisers or senior civil servants was ground breaking at the time. Some twenty years later the Business Circle is still thriving, proving it has held its value."

Alison Austin
Independent consultant,
Woodside Training

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