



A Green Recovery: The opportunities ahead

2020. Not the year we expected it to be. Whatever it was supposed to be known for, it will be forever be the year we went into lockdown. COVID – for all its disruption and destruction has perhaps given us a little glimpse into how we might rapidly transition toward a more prosperous, fair and environmentally aware society. If we can take some positives out of what has been a tragedy for many, then we absolutely should. The importance and urgency for our region is to recognise the best way to do this in a way that is right for us. To agree an action plan, pool resources and collectively move forward.

Nationally, there is a demand from the public for change. A recent survey, conducted for the not-for-profit advocacy group Positive Money by You Gov, found that 82% of members of the public questioned wanted the Government to prioritise the health and wellbeing of citizens over economic growth as they shaped a recovery. In the same survey 61% of respondents wanted improved social and environmental outcomes to be the Government's priority.

In our region, a discussion convened by the Southern Policy Centre (SPC)¹ has shown that a wide range of leaders from the public and private sector are looking for a recovery, which re-builds social cohesion in our communities and recognises our world-class environment as a shared asset that differentiates our area. Following that initial discussion, Future South² and Green Halo³ have held a series of conversations with SPC, which have resulted in the production of this thought piece around the opportunities and active elements that could form part of our regions response to a green recovery, post-COVID. It is not intended as a fait accompli, but simply a contribution to the conversations and discussions that are now taking place across the region.

The great news is that we can already point to activities, rich natural habitats and partnerships that give our region a head start. These are also the things that define us and make this place so very special, and suitable for a green recovery.

As we seek to re-build our economy and communities, so there is an opportunity to avoid a compartmentalised approach, and instead consider how we can shape an economy that builds on our strengths and works for the environment and our communities.

In this paper we have started to explore what a distinctive green recovery means, drawing from our rich assets and how that might help us recover more quickly; to a level that is more resilient and sustainable. For Nature, Economy and Society.

¹ <http://southernpolicycentre.co.uk/policy-and-research/recovery-in-the-central-south-collaboration-for-growth/>

² <https://www.futuresouth.org/about-us/>

³ <https://www.greenhalo.org.uk/about-green-halo/about-the-partnership/>

Playing to our strengths

Communities across our region face many common opportunities and challenges. There are shared economic priorities, demands for investment in critical infrastructure, and common social and environmental challenges. As we pursue a green recovery, so we should work together to find common answers to these problems, rather than acting in a way that may solve one problem whilst exacerbating others.

We do not start from scratch. Our region already has the cross-sectoral partnerships and the ambition to shape a green recovery. LEPs and councils across the region have developed plans and strategies to support the 'green' or 'zero-carbon' economy. Economic and environmental initiatives, from Future South to the Green Halo Partnership (see boxes 1 and 2) are bringing people together to find ways of building an economy that respects the environment and accrues benefits from our rich assets.

We also have organisations, some of whom are our partners, who are leading national and international thought on a fresh approach to the economy. The Ellen MacArthur Foundation, based on the Isle of Wight is encouraging thinking around a circular economy (see box 3). Our Universities are undertaking a range of relevant Research and Knowledge Exchange projects, and Local Nature Partnerships across the region are seeking to work with our LEPs to explore how we can pursue economic growth in a way that also reconnects with and renews our environment and society.

Community at the heart of our recovery

The lockdown has demonstrated the value of cohesive and resilient communities in which people support one another. Strong communities underpin economic activity by supporting health and social wellbeing, providing access to paid and voluntary work and local enterprise development. They are also a key component in the recovery and regeneration of town and city centres. During lockdown, many examples of community cohesiveness have sprung up across the region, with a burgeoning of neighbourhoods developing share economies that exchange produce and skills; run errands for strangers and support the vulnerable. In addition, the pandemic has highlighted the benefits that access to green and blue space brings to health, wellbeing and resilience, but also the inequalities in access to this space. A green and inclusive recovery will find ways to nurture, encourage and sustain these positive behaviours, and create environments for communities to thrive.

However, many voluntary and community-based organisations are now struggling and may not survive post-COVID, and the more deprived communities in our region, are likely to suffer disproportionately and find it hardest to recover. The region's recovery plans should include measures to strengthen local communities, including investment in local homes, support for community and voluntary organisations, leisure and cultural services and the empowerment of communities to shape their future and their local economies.

Box 1: Enterprise and the transition to a zero carbon economy

Future South, a partnership for the Central South, has been working on the transition to a zero carbon economy for almost ten years. It works with Local Government, businesses and academia to support collaboration around clean innovation. Moreover, it seeks to capitalise on the growing zero carbon economy in the south, with its emerging strengths in sustainable R&D, energy, water, waste management and construction.

By capitalising on these strengths, we can facilitate economic growth *and* job creation. The development of a zero carbon economy in the South will stimulate sustainable economic growth, create jobs and reduce our carbon emissions. There is already strong evidence for this. Together they have created over 250 clean growth jobs, helped to establish the Hampshire community bank, worked with over 200 businesses on low carbon innovation projects, attracted over £40M in inward investment and created Greentech South - the innovation and technology cluster and the first 'Energy and Environment' accredited cluster in the UK, and only UK member of the International Cleantech Network.

The region has the potential to become a national leader and gain international recognition for the success of its zero-carbon economy. Moreover, sustainability should be at the heart of the region's success in generating economic growth, prosperity and improving quality of life.

Through Future South, an internationally recognised not for profit public-private partnership, we have the potential to deliver a net zero carbon future, achieved by:

- Unlocking green finance
- Influencing and educating
- Providing access to global networks
- Delivering innovation support

We can support innovation through:

- Deploying renewable energy and other zero carbon technologies
- Mobility for all through efficient and sustainable transport
- Communities capitalising on the value of biodiversity
- Resilient homes and businesses
- Reducing resource use including water, waste and energy
- Creating a Net Zero Carbon Economy

Box 2: Precious Landscapes

Our region holds many examples of some of Europe's best sanctuaries for nature. Much of this part of southern England is internationally valued because of the quality of the natural environment.

The Green Halo Partnership, launched in 2017, wants to ensure that the natural environment is seen as an integral part of how we work and live, 'natural capital' for our area:

Their vision is for our region *to be a global exemplar of how our most precious landscapes can work in harmony with a thriving, economically successful community.*

The public, private and third sector collaboration's ambition is not constrained by administrative boundaries, opportunities can come from all areas and all sectors in and around the region – hence the Green Halo.

While many of our exemplar sites might be recognised within the national parks - both New Forest and South Downs (which make up c30% of Hampshire alone); the Isle of Wight UNESCO biosphere reserve, and within our marine protected areas, we have an opportunity to bring economies and societies across the region closer to nature. By recognising the contribution our natural environment makes to the local economy and society, we can ensure that we work to protect and improve our environment.

With a greater understanding of natural capital and the benefits it provides – to health and wellbeing, the economy and sustainable living – there is an opportunity to put the enhancement of these ecosystem services at the centre of plans to shape this special place – making it an even greater area to live or work, and which to visit. We should aim to be recognised across the world for our commitment to integrating nature and our natural environment with a thriving, economically successful community.

Leading the charge: The importance of leadership

There are two prerequisites to us making progress: leadership and collaboration. The former needs to come from those with the vision to see the opportunity on offer, and the status and authority to draw together a broad range of actors from across the region and from different sectors and communities. Collaboration, drawing together projects and programmes from communities, businesses and organisations across the area will be essential if we are to become greater than the sum of our parts and avoid narrow plans for recovery that do not draw on this richness and diversity. By committing to see the 'bigger picture' and by drawing together the projects, passion and commitment across our businesses and communities, we can manage the risk of failing to maximise the significant potential and benefits of an integrated approach of economic, environmental and social regeneration.

This coronavirus pandemic has posed unprecedented challenges for all parts of our society. For the majority, we have never known anything like this. However, this also poses a terrific opportunity to rethink who we are and how things are done, in a way that did not seem possible before. There is a small window, before we all head our separate ways to embrace adaptive leadership and

ensure effective collective decision-making: interpreting, harnessing and using the best available emerging evidence, changing trends and shifting understanding and behaviours.

Within our region, strong partnerships need to be reconfirmed, enhanced, or where necessary, formed to carry these opportunities forward. Investment in these collaborations and the people across our area, which have the potential to innovate and transform, will play an important role in leading a local green and inclusive recovery.

Box 3: A region of innovation, ideas and potential

The Ellen MacArthur Foundation was launched in 2010 to accelerate the transition to a circular economy. Since its creation, operating from the Isle of Wight, the charity has emerged as a global thought leader, establishing the circular economy on the agenda of decision makers across business, government, and academia. With the support of its Strategic Partners, the Foundation's work focuses on six interlinking areas: Learning; Business; Institutions, Governments and Cities; Insight and Analysis; Systemic Initiatives and; Communications.

A circular economy seeks to rebuild capital, whether this is financial, manufactured, human, social or natural. This ensures enhanced flows of goods and services.

Looking beyond the current take-make-waste extractive industrial model, a circular economy aims to redefine growth, focusing on positive society-wide benefits. It entails gradually decoupling economic activity from the consumption of finite resources, and designing waste out of the system. Underpinned by a transition to renewable energy sources, the circular model builds economic, natural, and social capital. It is based on three principles:

- Design out waste and pollution
- Keep products and materials in use
- Regenerate natural systems

Applying circular economy principles could unlock up to EUR 1.8 trillion of value for Europe's economy. Business plays a central role in creating the systemic change required to reap the financial benefits of this transition.

Both large corporates and disruptive start-ups inform research, build industry-specific expertise, and move from concept to practice, driving change across value chains and industries. Collaboration with suppliers, customers and infrastructure is the only way to build a circular economy with benefits throughout society.

Next Steps

There is an immediate opportunity to shape a future which achieves a vision for our world-class environment, delivering a world-class economy and thriving communities; a renewed and healthy partnership between nature, business and society. It is clear that many people want and hope for a different balance after the trauma and the learning of lockdown. However, if we are to realise that, we need a clear and consistent understanding of what we are trying to achieve and how best to deliver it across sectors and communities.

We need to act quickly, there is much planning for 'recovery' across the region. Without a focus on extracting any synergies, we are prone to efforts becoming disjointed and piecemeal. There are also those arguing that we simply need to "prioritise" the economy and get back to behaving as we did before, notwithstanding the clear appetite for a different approach. With well over half of the global economy now committed to net-zero and sustainable development goals, re-booting our old

economy is looking like a poor bet. A stable operating environment for the future will involve tackling deeply ingrained environmental, economic and social challenges – from climate change and inequality to our physical and mental health.

To get moving, we don't need new structures, rules or bureaucracies; we have the opportunity to build on the things already happening across our region. Drawing inspiration from the many grassroots projects, innovative businesses and passions of so many people, to re-shape an economy which is in harmony with our world-class environment and which helps our communities thrive. To do that, we need to ensure that we work together to design and implement programmes that achieve economic, environmental and social improvements.

There are three immediate actions that might help us take a more coherent and consistent approach to securing a 'green recovery':

- Develop a consistent definition of the concept of a green recovery, a common framework to organise our individual and collective contributions, identifying the key principles and outcomes which organisations, communities and individuals across the region can be invited to commit to. The definition and principles should draw on our local characteristics, reflecting economic, environmental and social strengths and account for challenges and opportunities;
- Undertake a simple audit of existing plans, strategies, projects and commitments and of our recovery initiatives to understand how they meet the principles and outcomes associated with our definition of green recovery;
- Bring together a cross-section of players, including LEPs, local councils, Local Nature Partnerships (LNPs), and other key partnerships and organisations to identify and steer the delivery of key projects and programmes that will realise the delivery of a green recovery for our region.

In the appendices that follow, we have provided some emerging principles and potential indicators of success that could be explored further (Appendix 1). These have been developed after conversations within different local, regional and national fora of which we are a part. It is put forward in good faith, and without agenda, recognising that it is often easier to start with a potential framework upon which we can collaboratively build, rather than a blank piece of paper. In that spirit, we welcome further ideas and contributions. In addition, we also note that it is important to acknowledge the relevant projects and initiatives already in operation. These are what provide value for the region beyond the adoption of a generic set of principles that could be applied to anywhere. To this end, we have summarised some of the projects and initiatives in progress that are already contributing to a post-COVID green recovery (Appendix 2). This is not meant as a comprehensive list, and we recognise that there will be additions to be made, but it provides sufficient evidence to give the idea of a green recovery life within our geographic context. We put these forward to underpin those conversations that will need to take place during these next steps.

We welcome feedback on our suggestions and would be keen to build a more comprehensive picture of projects listed in Appendix 2 that could contribute to a green recovery.

You can do this at <http://www.greentechsouth.com/greenrecovery>

Appendix 1: Green Recovery: Some emerging principles and potential indicators of success

Principle 1: We are building a zero-carbon, sustainable economy

Success will look like:

- Our businesses follow zero carbon principles and seek to minimise use of non-renewable resources
- Provisions for new and existing businesses are designed to support and enhance the region's natural capital
- Our digital infrastructure supports new ways of doing business that adds value and removes negative externalities.

Principle 2: We are actively cutting pollution and reducing carbon emissions from business, homes and transport

Success will look like:

- Our towns and cities are healthy and green places, free from pollution
- Travel by public transport, or actively through cycling or walking is the preferred and practical choice
- Energy and resource use of homes, offices and other buildings is as efficient as we can achieve

Principle 3: We are creating greener, digitally connected communities

Success will look like:

- Our communities are designed to the highest environmental standards: Homes are affordable, built using sustainable materials and designed to minimise their environmental impact; set within a network of green space
- The buildings we already have are supported through a comprehensive and inclusive retrofit programme
- All our residents have easy and quick access to the services they need and people recognise they are part of a supportive community

Principle 4: Our communities are strong and inclusive

Success will look like:

- Reduced inequality of access to the benefits of being part of a world-class environment. We have prioritised action and interventions in areas of inequality, and this has been effective
- Our communities and people have the skills they need for the new, green economy
- People in our region enjoy excellent physical and mental health, wherever they live

Principle 5: We embrace and value the natural environment as integral to our overall success

Success will look like:

- Our unique natural habitats are thriving, enhancing and expanding the world-class natural environment that sits on our doorstep
- Communities and businesses fully benefit from natural capital to improve their prosperity and health
- Networks of natural green space thrive around and within all our towns and cities

Appendix 2:

		Building a zero-carbon economy	Cutting pollution and reducing carbon emissions	Greener, digitally connected communities	Strong and inclusive communities	Valuing Nature
Plastic Revolution	The plight of single use plastic has been a key environmental focus in recent years brought into sharp focus by the Blue Planet series. Plastic was originally designed to be a robust permanent material not something that provided a single use, little value, throw away item and correctly used can be a valuable material. At Future South we are looking to help drive the revolution that stops the leakage of valueless single plastics and materials into the environment swapping them for products and resource that have value through recycling and upcycling. We are interested in solutions that address the current plastic issue, looking at innovative ways to remove the fragments from the natural environment.	✓				✓
Greentech South	Since 2014 Greentech South have been helping businesses transform their innovative, low carbon ideas into commercialised products and services, stimulating sustainable economic growth and creating job opportunities in the green economy. It is our ready made gateway to large corporates and disruptive innovative start-ups to inform research, build industry-specific expertise, and move from concept to practice, driving change across value chains and industries.	✓		✓		
Hampshire Retrofit	Supporting businesses and local authorities to understand the importance and potential opportunities that arise through climate retrofits and deliver programmes across the region. This includes bringing together best practice, innovation and where possible additional funding which can then be used by businesses and partners in the wider region. Retrofitting homes and businesses are crucial to delivering UK carbon targets as 80% of the homes that will be built by 2050 are already in existence. Utility companies are working	✓	✓	✓	✓	

	together to ensure that water and energy efficiency are tackled together, alongside signposting all the types of affordability support available.					
New Development	The South of England is due to expand rapidly and the Future South Board are focused on ensuring that this new development is sustainable, innovative and exemplary to make certain that the use of resources are minimised, quality of life is promoted and the region's economy is fast tracked. We are actively working with a number of pioneering developments looking at water recycling, renewable energy generation and energy efficiency. We welcome partners to join us on this exciting journey.	✓		✓		
Mobility as a Service	Traditional ways of thinking about mobility are increasingly being challenged. Mobility is now a complex web of decision-making for consumers. Mobility as a Service attempts to respond to these changes by developing transport solutions that are customer-centric. Mobility as a Service puts the customer experience first, increasing convenience, effectiveness and satisfaction by enabling sharing and personalization through real-time connectivity.		✓			
Local Authority Plans	Working in partnership with local authorities in the region to pool expertise, resources and create mutually beneficial links between sectors to pioneer new approaches and provide vision for a sustainable region. Local authorities are trusted partners with local residents and businesses and have a fundamental role on providing local leadership to deliver zero carbon policies and support for communities.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Energy Hubs	Working to reduce consumption and increase the level of renewable generated in the region and providing leadership to show how smart networks can balance supply and demand and lead the way towards demonstrating how zero carbon communities can be created that involves innovation and empowering locally inclusive business models.	✓	✓		✓	
Sustainable Finance	The Hampshire Community Bank has been created with the intention of filling the current gap in the financial market where local Small and Medium sized enterprises (SMEs) are unable to acquire the much needed financing required to grow. We as a future Community Bank will look to finance the growth and future development of the SMEs with our lending services throughout Hampshire. Currently, we have already started out lending to SMEs throughout Hampshire with our Green Growth Loans Program (GGL) which was initially backed by Eastleigh Borough Council and the Government. The GGL program is also diversified by the types of business, and this program only lends to businesses which are believed to have a positive economic benefit to Hampshire. Because of this a strong group of our shareholders are public institutions, including Hampshire local councils and universities.	✓				✓
Natural Capital	The Green Halo Partnership brings together businesses, universities, charities and communities who share a vision, acknowledging the contribution of natural capital in their planning, budgeting and decision-making. We aim to ensure our world class environment, centred around the New Forest National Park in the "Central South" region, flourishes as an integral part of our wider area's thriving economy and society. Green Halo's work is focused around Natural capital; the world's stock of natural resources, which includes geology, soils, air, water and all living organisms – and their measurable value to our society. Natural capital assets provide people with a wide range of goods and services which underpin our economy and society – so-called "ecosystem services". Supported via these services, it is essential that we develop ever-	✓			✓	✓

	closer relationship to business, and Green Halo's collaboration with Future South aims to accelerate integrated projects and dialogue between private and public sectors.					
Value of Water	The South East of England is officially declared as 'water stressed' and with population growth and future climate scenarios suggesting lower water availability then balancing supply and demand is in even greater focus. Target 100 is not just about reducing water consumption; it is about shifting society to value water. In a climate restrained world we are aiming to effectively manage water resources, keep bills affordable, drive innovation and support residents. One simple initiative to really change this perception is through the adoption of a water label on water using products. Southern Water has set a bold and UK leading demand reduction target to reduce per capita consumption to 100 litres per person per day across our region by 2040. Portsmouth Water is building a new reservoir to capture more of the excess winter storage together can work with the water companies to deliver on this ambition.				✓	✓
Natural Health Service	National Parks England and Public Health England have an accord to support joint action on improving health and wellbeing through our Natural Environment. The Accord represents a high-level commitment to work proactively and practically together to secure better public health outcomes. It draws on the strength of both organisations to deliver this shared goal by capitalising on the significant opportunities for people to improve their physical and mental health and overall wellbeing; and recognising the role which the National Parks play as part of our wider natural environment that can support keeping people healthy. Our national parks are very active in this accord, and partnerships in the region, such as Green Halo, include key partners, not traditionally associated with the natural environment, such as Clinical Commissioning Groups.	✓	✓		✓	✓
Green training skills and expertise to support a regional economy	To support a green recovery, maximise opportunities and ensure success it is widely recognised that we need to grow and enhance our skill base. The region already places host to a wide range of relevant and experienced trainers and skills providers. There is an emerging vision for a centre of excellence for green training and skills, supported by the rich and diverse habitats and world-class blue and green environments that surround us.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

