



Briefing

Investing in a green economy

Why the Comprehensive Spending Review must be green and fair

The Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) will be the acid test of the depth of the Government's commitment to be "the greenest Government ever".

Big spending cuts will hit the poorest hardest, risk sending the UK back into recession, and stunt the big investment that's urgently needed if the UK is to meet its legally binding carbon targets. There is an alternative.

This briefing sets out why the CSR must be **fair, responsible** and a decisive step towards a sustainable and **low-carbon UK economy**.

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Summary

The Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) will be the acid test of the depth of the Government's commitment to be "the greenest Government ever". Green measures can also help spark a progressive and sustainable economic recovery.

There are three main tests for the CSR:

- **Will it help the economic recovery?**

The UK's deficit is large, but spending cuts of the scale and speed proposed risk pushing the UK back into recession. Deep public spending cuts that increase unemployment will increase welfare spending and decrease tax revenues, potentially worsening the deficit. The CSR must prioritise investment in sectors that strengthen the economic recovery and measures that boost employment.

- **Will it be fair?**

There are rightly strong concerns that proposed public spending cuts will be deeply regressive. Cuts to public services hit poorest households hardest, and the Treasury's own figures show that there would be major increases in unemployment. The detail of the CSR has to prevent regressive impacts; as David Cameron said, "we've got to do this in a way that is responsible and fair".

- **Will it move us towards a low-carbon economy?**

Climate change is the greatest threat to all countries' social and economic security. Energy security will also increasingly be an issue for all countries. It is imperative that the UK weans itself off dependence on fossil fuels. CSR measures could either have a strong positive or negative effect on our ability to do this.

Many environmental measures deliver on all three of these criteria. So instead of the widely touted cuts to Green public bodies and policies, Friends of the Earth advocate a different approach at the CSR:

- First, **investing** in environmental spending measures which promote growth sectors, save money and create jobs – helping not harming the economic recovery
- Second, using environmental **taxes** and "Robin Hood" taxes on financial speculation as a partial alternative to regressive cuts to public services.
- Third, **targeted spending cuts** can help – if existing spending is ineffective or in conflict with core Government objectives, it should be cut. For example, the Government's road building programme is not a cost-effective means of cutting congestion, and is direct conflict with its climate change goals.

This briefing sets out measures which can be implemented at the CSR; a broader economic approach with a focus beyond spending cuts is also required to deliver a sustainable, fair economic recovery.

Key: Positive impact Neutral or uncertain impact Negative impact

		Tests for the Comprehensive Spending Review		
	Example Spending measures	Will it help to deliver an economic recovery?	Is it fair?	Will it move us towards a low-carbon economy?
Investor confidence	Properly capitalised Green Investment Bank	Crucial to support growing low-carbon sector and unlock private investment	Bank focus on energy efficiency and community scale schemes is essential.	Critical element of growth of renewables and energy efficiency
	£60m for ports upgrades	This investment is needed to ensure manufacturing facilities come to Britain	Essential for job creation in more vulnerable regions	Major bottleneck element of strategy for offshore renewables
	Funding for low carbon innovation	Current funding leverages in many multiples more of private sector investment		Essential for growth of low-carbon sector. Core part of low-carbon strategy
Save money	Funding for public sector and residential energy efficiency	This actively saves the UK money – pays for itself many times over	Energy is a greater percentage of expenditure for those on lower incomes.	Strong energy efficiency measures are integral to low-carbon economy.
	Spending to tackle fuel poverty	Thousands of jobs already created with potential for many more.	Strong job creator; reduces fuel bills for most vulnerable households	Essential element of Government's climate change and wider strategy
Fairness	Equality impact assessment		Essential to ensure overall effect of CSR is fair, as promised	
	Bus support Effective Local Sustainable Transport Fund	Public transport sustains many jobs Jobs-intensive in comparison with road building programme	Poorer households more reliant on public transport Progressive: poorer households are more reliant on public transport, walking and cycling.	Reducing car journeys must be central to transport strategy

Fairness	£5 billion roads building programme	New roads can soon fill with traffic. There are more effective ways of meeting transport goals.	Road building is regressive spending – used far more by richer households	High negative local impacts; also increases carbon emissions
	End fossil fuel subsidies, such as via the Export Credit Guarantee Department	Targeted support is needed for British business, but these specific subsidies are not the most effective for increasing jobs in the UK	Ongoing subsidies would mean more regressive spending cuts will be implemented elsewhere	These subsidies increase carbon emissions globally
Policies linked to Comprehensive Spending Review				
Investor confidence	Retain the existing Feed-in Tariff (FIT) rates	Strong policy for big growth sector. Essential that investor confidence is not dented.	Government needs to do more to ensure take-up of Feed-in Tariffs by housing associations etc – including through Green Investment Bank support for initial capital	Core part of Government's climate change strategy
	Bring in the Renewable Heat Incentive as planned	Essential that policy is confirmed to prevent damage to big growth sector	See above as with FIT	Core part of Government's climate change strategy
Save money	Green Deal and other energy efficiency policies	Green Deal needs to be ambitious, attractive and with key role for local authority coordination	Local coordination role will help widespread take-up, including fuel poor – subsidy will be needed here	Energy efficiency must be a core part of Government's climate change strategy
Create jobs	Increase recycling targets	Strong job creator and saves money – UK throws away £650m worth of resources a year.	Strong job creator	Saves resources and boosts profile of action.

1 Risks and opportunities

Cut or invest? The need for a responsible, long-term approach

The UK's economic troubles are indeed pressing now, but there are two looming issues which are even more severe.

Climate change is the greatest threat to all countries' social and economic security. The Stern Review highlighted that the cost of inaction was five times higher than the cost of action; Stern has subsequently said that his Review underestimated the scale of the problem. Climate change is also a major justice issue – it is the poorest people in the poorest countries who will be hit hardest; in the UK too, climate change will hit the poorest hardest – people who are less able to insure their homes, and less able to move home. Climate change is a social and economic disaster the world cannot afford, and upon which it must urgently act.

Alongside this, energy security is a rising economic issue. Oil prices are set to rise sharply over the coming years as available sources decline and usage in growing Asian economies increases. A new report from Lloyds 360° Risk Insight and Chatham House starkly warns UK business that “traditional models that focus on annual profits and, at best medium term strategies, may struggle... energy security requires a long term view and it is the companies that grasp this who will trade on into the second half of this century”ⁱ.

Action is needed to protect the UK from climate change and energy insecurity. But this can also help the UK's economic recovery. There are three areas for action:

- Increasing **market confidence** so that there is investment in growing green sectors
- A focus on **green jobs**: which will increase tax revenues and cut welfare spending
- A focus on **efficiency** – saving billions for businesses, households and public bodies

A combination of measures in these areas can also help ensure the CSR is more progressive.

The prize is worth winning. The low carbon and environmental sector is growing fast. The Government predicts it will be worth £150 billion by 2015 with 400,000 extra jobs if it continues to be nurtured. More manufacturing and service jobs are urgently needed, particularly in those areas that are facing predicted higher unemployment as a result of the Government's cuts.

There will be no shortage of competition. Even during the recession, German investment in renewables rose by 20 per cent, and now employs over 300,000 people. As economies across the world gear up to take advantage of the potential markets for low-carbon and other environmental goods the UK needs to stay competitive, decarbonise our energy generation, and spark a low-carbon economy. As Tim Yeo MP, chairman of the Energy and Climate Change Select Committee notes, *“ducking the challenge of climate change will mean not only that British businesses miss the benefit of developing the low-carbon technology the world needs, but also that the British people pay a financial penalty for remaining dependent on high-carbon electricity, transport and buildings”*ⁱⁱ.

Spending cuts: the need for a broader approach

The Government has chosen a path for cutting the deficit focused overwhelmingly upon public spending cuts. But it has not fully explored other options.

Clamping down on tax avoidance and evasion is one; another is tax reform. A gradual but determined shift in the balance of taxation away from 'goods' like labour and onto environmental pollution can benefit economy, people and environment. This is a long-term agenda around shifting taxation - but initially green tax rises could be used to reduce the extent of public sector spending cuts. The Government has committed to "increase the proportion of tax revenue accounted for by environmental taxes"ⁱⁱⁱ, and in September 2010 the Liberal Democrat conference passed a very welcome motion, backed by the Energy and Climate Change Secretary Chris Huhne, to secure at least 10 per cent of total tax take from environmental taxes by 2015^{iv}.

Friends of the Earth is also a member of the Robin Hood Tax Alliance^v, calling for the introduction of a taxes upon international financial transactions; while the Government waits for international agreement on some of these taxes, there is nothing stopping it pressing on with implementing its own tax on trading in Sterling, raising billions.

2 Areas for action

There are four broad themes for helping deliver a sustainable, fair recovery:

- Boosting **investor confidence**
- Generating green **jobs**
- **Saving money**
- Putting **fairness** at the heart of the CSR

Investor confidence

The **Green Investment Bank** Commission has said that "*£800 billion to £1 trillion of investment is required by 2030 to replace, upgrade and decarbonise Britain's infrastructure. This £40 to £50 billion annual requirement substantially exceeds the historical average and is on a scale not seen since reconstruction after the Second World War*"^{vi}.

The market is not yet confident or ready to deliver that scale of investment. Time is not on our side. Public money needs to be used wisely to reduce the financial risk of investment and lever in significant amounts of private funding. For example, the investment arm of the Carbon Trust has employed public funds to lever in significantly more private capital, through dispersing the £20m Marine Renewables Proving Fund it has helped to lever £40m of private sector funding to the wave and tidal sector. This type of excellent work is needed on a much larger scale.

The Government has committed to introduce a Green Investment Bank (GIB) but has so far not set out the amount of public money that will be used to capitalise the bank to enable it to start leveraging private funds. At least £6billion is needed over the next four years, and establishing the GIB in law must be a matter of priority for the Government.

The Government has given contradictory signals to investors about its support for small scale renewables. For example, its reluctance to confirm that it will deliver a **Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI)** has served to drastically undermine industry confidence. As Brian Mark, technical director of engineering firm Mott Macdonald, stated this month: *“it will be a complete disaster if the scheme [the RHI] is scrapped... there is now a hiatus in the industry just at the point we don't need it”^{vii}*.

The same goes for **Feed-in Tariffs**, successfully campaigned for by Friends of the Earth. New research by consultants Arup demonstrates that there is a *“greatly improved investment environment for most small scale renewable energy technologies as a result of the introduction of the FIT and the proposed RHI”^{viii}*. FITs are guaranteed for 20-25 years and provide transparency, longevity and certainty for those thinking about generating their own on-site energy – but could be under threat. It would be desperately short-sighted to weaken the FIT and fail to bring in the Renewable Heat Incentive.

Generating green jobs

Nationally

The Government must be serious about bringing green jobs to the UK and ensuring that the transition to the low-carbon economy benefits the whole of the UK. It needs to strategically use public funds to boost the development of low-carbon industry with a particular focus on bolstering areas threatened by the withdrawal of public sector employment and the long-term decline of traditional industry.

It is very welcome that the Government has honoured some commitments of the previous administration to **directly invest in or subsidise** the development of strategically critical infrastructure and industry – for example, the £20m grant to Nissan in Sunderland for the production of electric cars. This approach must be extended.

The previous Government announced £60m to upgrade Britain's **ports** infrastructure to enable them to handle the components of offshore wind turbines – a key bottleneck limiting the attractiveness of the UK for this industry. This commitment should be honoured by the new Government.

The Government must also take a continued active interest in helping **new technologies**. The Carbon Trust has a successful record in nurturing high-technology businesses, and leveraging in private sector investment. In recent months, E.On have joined the Trust's Offshore Wind Accelerator^{ix} programme, which aims to reduce technology costs, to praise from the Coalition's energy minister, and the Trust and the University of Cambridge have launched a new company to produce low-cost organic photovoltaic solar cells. To date the Carbon Trust has leveraged £2billion of private sector investment into the low carbon

technology sector. This is essential work to ensure the UK takes full-advantage of these rapidly growing economic sectors.

The Government must also maintain its proposed programme of support for the demonstration of **Carbon Capture and Storage** (CCS) – a technology that could help bridge the transition to the low-carbon economy, provided, if successful, it is accompanied by strict standards on future emissions from power stations.

Investing in the future of the UK also requires support for **research and development**, and not just for low carbon-technologies. To boost food security and help secure the long-term viability of UK sustainable farming, agriculture research budgets must be preserved, although redirected towards approaches for farming to reduce UK and global climate impacts.

As well as investing in creating jobs, the Government must make sure funding is available for **skills** development. All jobs will need to become 'green', in that energy and resource efficiency will need to become much more central to everyday working life. Skills are not just vital for the low-carbon economy but they also deliver wider social benefits, including social cohesion. The Government must see supporting skills development as a strong area for investment, particularly in areas of the country hit hardest by the decline of traditional industry and public spending cuts – and make sure skills development is explicitly included in its approach to investing in the economy.

Locally

Investment is critical, but it must be supported by the right policy drivers to spark job generation. For example, research from Friends of the Earth shows that an increase in the UK **recycling** target to 75 per cent would create over 50,000 jobs across the country^x.

Friends of the Earth's call for **Local Carbon Budgets**^{xi} for all local authorities has the potential to generate thousands of jobs. Local leadership is going to be critical to reshaping local economics and cutting carbon in a way that makes sense for communities and business – and is a cost-effective way^{xii} to undertake programmes like housing retrofit and local transport planning. The strategies that all councils would put together for carbon reduction would be visions for their local areas, linking carbon reduction with regeneration, employment and local economic development. In this time of deep uncertainty for local authority budgets, the Government must make sure councils can fund the staff they need to put these plans together: a guaranteed Energy Saving and Investment Grant must be awarded to all authorities. This would only need to be a relatively modest grant, of the order of £60,000 per authority – approximately £20-25m in total, per year, for the duration of the CSR period.

The Government also needs to act to ensure **sustainable food production** in the UK, reducing farmers' dependence on soy imports for feeding livestock. This should be part of a broader Government Sustainable Livestock Strategy, focused on improving the sustainability of livestock farming and consumption in the UK, creating a thriving farming sector that is less highly dependent on commodity prices of oil and feed. The CSR should maintain and expand the existing 'protein premium' – currently £8m a year – which boosts the domestic

production of animal feed. Keeping the Higher Level Scheme – which provides support to farmers whose practices benefit biodiversity – will help deliver the Government’s new strategy “Nature of England”.

Saving Money

As businesses, residents and the public sector look to save money, a welcome spotlight is falling upon the role of **energy efficiency**. This will save people, Government and businesses billions of pounds, create hundreds of thousands of jobs, tackle fuel poverty, climate change and increase the UK’s energy security.

The centrepiece of the Government’s approach on energy efficiency is the “**Green Deal**” for both residents and businesses, with loans being made available for efficiency improvements, repaid through energy bills. At this stage there are unanswered questions about how the Government will ensure comprehensive take-up and ensure that vulnerable or fuel poor households are not left in the cold. The Government is very unlikely to be able to deliver the scale of carbon reduction required from housing, whilst also ensuring the scheme works for the fuel poor, unless it acts to make the scheme genuinely attractive to householders. Local authorities can also help to sculpt local take-up in a way that makes the most sense for local communities – for example, targeting the first wave of installations at fuel poor households. The Green Deal also needs a genuinely attractive interest rate to ensure the level of take-up that’s necessary. The Government must address these significant issues and ensure that at least 7m homes are made 60 per cent more energy efficient by 2020 - and that there are no properties with an Energy Performance Certificate banding of D by the same year.

Action on energy and resource efficiency remains critical, now – for both environmental and economic reasons. Existing mechanisms must be protected:

- **Public sector energy efficiency:** Salix Finance administers loans and match funding to the public sector on behalf of DECC. For every £10m invested by Salix in 2010, it reports that it will facilitate projects worth £20m, saving £6m annually and a total of £80m over the projects’ life.
- **Independent and impartial advice to businesses and residents:** The work of the Energy Saving Trust and Carbon Trust must be preserved. They provide invaluable advice to local authorities, individuals, the public sector and businesses about how to take up green energy and use less power, thus saving cash. They benefit the UK economy by far more than the amount of public spending they receive - yet even they have been rumoured to be “under review”. The Energy Saving Trust has saved £1.5bn on people’s energy bills since they were established; the Carbon Trust has helped businesses and public sector bodies save £2.6bn - in 2009/2010 alone, the Carbon Trust’s work saved £1 billion for these organisations. The Government must also make sure it continues to support green workplace initiatives – workplaces generate more than a quarter of UK carbon emissions and it is vital that Government invests in building awareness and momentum behind workplace carbon reduction.
- **Warm Front:** Government investment in installing energy efficiency through the Warm Front scheme save recipients an average of £650 a year on their energy bills –

and the scheme supports 8,000 jobs. As a result, the £350m-a-year programme has been praised by the National Audit Office for providing value for money. Even when the Green Deal is up and running, hard-to-treat and fuel poor households will continue to require Government subsidy if the scheme is to be truly effective for all.

- **Advice on resource efficiency:** the UK landfills and incinerates at least £650m recyclable resources in the municipal and commercial & industrial waste streams every year^{xiii}. The advisory body WRAP, which provides essential information to councils, businesses and the public on recycling, has already downsized as a result of initial cuts, such that further cuts would certainly endanger the quality of its advice on maximising the efficiency and quality of waste collection. And the Environment Agency, thought to be “under review” by the Government, has a pivotal role to play in monitoring the export of waste and standards in waste processing facilities. Further changes to the taxation of waste –such as on waste sent to incineration, and including incinerator bottom ash within the higher band of landfill tax – would help to boost recycling rates, thus creating jobs. Ten times as many jobs are created per tonne of waste recycled than landfilled or incinerated.

Fairness

Given the risk that so much of the cuts agenda will be regressive – the Government’s first Budget was criticised by the Institute for Fiscal Studies as “clearly regressive” – it is vital that the CSR sets out to be consciously progressive.

Environmental measures can help here. **Fuel poverty** in the UK is a national disgrace, with 5 million households unable to afford to keep their homes warm. A massive programme of energy efficiency is essential here, and is a major job creator. The existing Warm Front funds, targeted at the most vulnerable people, are a bare minimum part of the solution and must not be cut.

Transport spending is another area where fairness is critical. The poorest in society depend more on public transport than the richest, but cuts to bus subsidies could drastically affect the quality of services. Rumoured cuts to the Bus Services Operators Grant could result in bus costs and fares rising by 10 per cent and services being cut by 10 per cent. Poorer households benefit twice as much as richer households from spending on public transport, cycling and walking, and richer households benefit over 4 times as much as poorer households from spending on new road building. Bus support must be maintained.

As the Government seeks to cut the deficit and tackle carbon emissions a sensible place to start is **ending investment in high-carbon** and expensive infrastructure, such as roads, rather than cutting service or investment upon which poorer people rely. The eight most expensive **road** schemes in the roads programme inherited from the previous Government would cost £5billion – spending that would increase carbon emissions. These should be scrapped.

Meanwhile local authorities struggle to find the funds to support schemes such as Smarter Travel Choices, which are proven and cost-effective ways of encouraging people to switch to existing forms of low-carbon transport in their area, such as public transport, walking and

cycling. A national roll-out of Smarter Travel Choices has been called for by the Committee on Climate Change.

The Government has recently announced a new **Local Sustainable Transport Fund** to deliver local economic growth and carbon reduction. This is a very welcome step that follows campaigning from Friends of the Earth and others for a Carbon Reduction Fund for transport. As always, the devil will be in the detail. It is vitally important that the fund is properly resourced – at least £300m a year should be provided to help local authorities invest in better transport for their local areas, including a large-scale roll-out of proven cost-effective Smarter Travel Choices measures.

Overall, it's essential that the Government carries out a full **Equalities Impact Assessment**, including consultation, in line with their legal equality duties, on the measures proposed in the CSR.

Summary of recommendations

1	Green Investment Bank	Set up in law and capitalise with at least £6bn over the CSR period, aimed at accelerating investment into renewables and energy efficiency
2	Feed-in Tariffs and Renewable Heat Incentive	Put an end to speculation which is damaging this growing industry. Commit to a strong FIT and RHI.
3	Ports	Invest £60m in ports infrastructure to ensure a strong base in the UK for marine renewable manufacturing facilities
4	Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS)	Keep the funds for CCS demonstration, but couple with stronger emissions standards for new power stations
5	Equality Impact Assessment	This legal obligation is an essential safeguard to be able to ensure that overall the CSR is progressive
6	Carbon Trust, Energy Saving Trust and Salix funding	Keep funding for the Carbon Trust which is doing an invaluable job both at saving businesses money and ensuring investment in new technologies and sectors. The EST and Salix are saving households and public bodies money – delivering many multiples of savings over their budget.
7	Warm Front	Keep Warm Front at at least current levels of funding – helping to tackle fuel poverty, slash energy bills and target Government support at those most in need.
8	“Green Deal” for homes	Strengthen the Green Deal programme so that it genuinely delivers a huge leap forward in the rate of full-house retrofits. Homes energy efficiency is a triple win for the UK economy, environment and people.
9	Buses and local transport funding	The announcement of the Local Sustainable Transport Fund is welcome – it must be at least £300m a year to support cost-effective solutions to congestion. And support for buses is vital, delivering on multiple objectives, and must be maintained.
10	Sustainable farming	Keep funding for programmes for farming practices supporting biodiversity and reducing dependence on imported animal feed.
11	Cut roads building	The eight most expensive road projects in the last Government’s programme will cost £5 billion. There are cheaper, greener and fairer ways to meet transport needs.
12	Cut subsidies for fossil fuel projects	Government support for fossil fuel projects through the Export Credit Guarantee Department should be cut, as promised by the Conservatives in opposition.
13	Energy Saving and Investment Grant for all local authorities	This relatively small grant would help the UK to meet its carbon targets cost-effectively and ensure funding cuts do not halt the ability of councils to lead strong carbon reduction plans.

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