



GREEN EUROPEAN
FOUNDATION



PLACE-BASED
CLIMATE ACTION
NETWORK



REPORT

Green European Foundation, with the
support of Green Foundation Ireland,
invite you to a one-day


CONFERENCE

*Climate Jobs and a Just Transition:
Responding to our climate and ecological emergency*



Venue: Canada Room, Queen's University Belfast

Saturday 9 November 2019 – 10:00 to 17:30



*"This is the moment for us to tell a bigger, more connected, more powerful story.
We can have a better, cleaner, healthier society, and we can have it globally.
We need not a just transition but a much deeper more profound justice transition."*

– Asad Rehman, War on Want

The Green European Foundation/Green Foundation Ireland conference held in Queen's University Belfast on 9 November 2019 saw a range of engaging speakers from Ireland and the UK present their perspectives on just transition and climate jobs. Just transition refers to putting social justice at the heart of the transition to a zero-carbon economy and society, ensuring workers and communities are not left behind by the changes required.



Climate Jobs

*"We need to make sure that the scale of the response
meets the scale of the challenge."*

– Jonathan Essex, Green House Think Tank

In the first session of the day **Jonathan Essex** and **Peter Sims** of Green House Think Tank presented their recent [climate jobs](#) report, where they looked at the number and types of jobs which could be created in a zero carbon UK in 2030. Overall, it was calculated that a £30bn UK package could create at least 800,000 jobs.

Through the climate jobs project the authors sought to quantify the scale of change required to reach zero carbon by 2030, for example, how many more buses will be needed, how much more recycling will be needed. The authors used current UK-wide land use, jobs density and population density statistics to estimate the changes required for zero carbon, and then calculated this information for 200 regions across the UK. Their analysis also included analysis of jobs in local councils in recent years.

Green House Think Tank has produced a climate jobs summary for each of the 200 regions of the UK studied, for example, in Sheffield 20,000 jobs could be created in the short-term. The authors also looked at how and where these new jobs are going to be distributed, for example, some jobs will move from urban to rural areas.

Five sectors were modelled:

- Renewable energy
 - Install wind/solar/tidal
 - Maintain installations
 - Upgrade grid
 - Storage and demand management

- Built environment
 - Energy retrofit street by street
 - Install energy efficiency and renewable energy
 - Retrain construction workers
 - Better maintenance
- Sustainable transport
 - Car share schemes
 - Increase public transport
 - Improve cycling/walking routes and facilities
 - Preventative road maintenance
- Reuse and recycling
 - Repair workshops
 - Deconstruction rather than demolition
 - Sorting and reclaiming materials
 - Totals compensated for jobs lost in landfill and incineration
- Rural economy – land use, agriculture and forestry
 - Active woodland management
 - Smallholders
 - Farm workers and fruit growers
 - Localised supply chain and processing business
- Support/training – enable the transition in other sectors
 - Trainers
 - Volunteer coordinators
 - Workplace mentors
 - Innovation and start-up support
 - Support workers

For example, looking at the transport sector in Northern Ireland, the report estimates 3,400 new bus drivers, 900 new bus support staff and 300 new railway staff, compensating for 3,000 jobs lost in car maintenance.

The authors acknowledge that making these climate jobs happen would be more complex than the numbers suggest, and require much discussion locally. They also noted that these are conservative estimates of job numbers, as they did not include unproven technologies, and did not calculate jobs in certain sectors such as reforestation, restoration of peat bogs, or the offshore wind industry, so jobs created could be even higher than their estimates. Essex notes that "we have talked about a million jobs, but there may be more like three million". The authors did not look at the training required to reskill and upskill workers but they cited [this paper](#) from the University of Leeds on skills for the low-carbon transition. They also referenced the work of Colin Crooks, who calculate that [1 million social enterprise jobs could be created across the UK](#).

Essex and Sims stressed that this is about creating jobs locally at the appropriate state and scale, and a commitment to a different way forward, for example, retrofitting existing houses rather than building new ones. With this report they have modelled a new economy, where more jobs create a greater sense of community. As Sims commented, this is the opportunity to create jobs for people in our society who in one way or another are being left behind.

Place-based Policy Alignment and Just Transition – the Belfast Climate Commission

"The current economic model that we have is destroying our earth ... unfettered economic growth cannot work"

– Damien McIlroy

The first speaker of this session was **Damien McIlroy** of Queen's University Belfast, who looked at just transition from the perspective of place-based and people-based action. He argued that "free market-based policy still determines the outcome trajectory of the current environmental crisis". His advice was to "throw out the rulebook and challenge the existing wisdom" and focus on system change, inclusion and human rights.

He continued by arguing that we are trapped in ever decreasing circles by the economic model we are in and the "drive to accumulate dilemma". The current function of state or local government, he suggested, is to "support the functionalist requirements of the capitalist modes of production". Instead, we must "co-design a new social-economic strategy premised on an economy of maximum sustainable size".

McIlroy spoke of participatory approaches to system change, citing as examples the US-based [Climate Justice Alliance](#) and their "Our Power Campaign", through which they organised just transition assemblies around the US. He also referenced the work of [Isabelle Anguelovski](#), who looked at Citizens and Workers and Environmental Justice Activism (CEJ) activism in three cities – Havana, Boston and Barcelona. He suggested legal measures and instruments that could be used to build this kind of action, for example, employment equality acts and the International Labour Organisation (ILO) just transition standards, along with groups who could be involved – neighbourhood renewal partnerships, thematic community partnerships, HR/equality rights based organisations and activist education organisations.

Clare McKeown from Belfast City Council spoke next, presenting the elements of the council's resilience strategy as part of the [100 resilient cities](#) project. The council has an all-party working group on the climate crisis, along with the city-wide Resilience and Sustainability Board, an Innovation and Inclusive Growth Commission and a partnership with Queen's University Belfast, [Place-based Climate Action Network](#). The council also works with the Eurocities Environment Forum and with Innovate UK. McKeown noted that 75% of GHGs come from cities, and cited Barcelona, Malmo, Copenhagen and Bristol as leaders in the development of low-carbon cities. One of the reports commissioned by the Resilient Cities project is [The Economics of Low-Carbon Cities](#) report, which McKeown described as a "mini-Stern report".

Amanda Slevin, Policy Fellow in the Place-based Climate Action Network (PCAN) at Queen's University Belfast, introduced the PCAN project which was launched earlier this year. PCAN is about translating climate policy into action on the ground in communities, and involves the establishment of three place-based climate commissions (Belfast, Leeds and Edinburgh) across the thematic platforms of business and finance. There is also a PCAN fund

for local projects, for which key priority areas have also been identified, including infrastructure, food security, business and supply chains and natural capital. She highlighted the number of deprived communities in Belfast and asked how just transition can be achieved without leaving anyone behind. She stressed that projects must be community-led and that "we cannot have projects forced on communities":

"It's not about change being forced upon people but change happening in partnership with people, about collective action and participatory democracy".

Trade Unions and Just Transition – From Origins and Context to Policy and Practice

The first speaker in this session was **Stiofán Ó Nualláin** of Trademark and Unite, who discussed the connection between environmentalists and workers. He noted that "environmentalism focused on bad consumer choices only appeals to comfortably well-off people who have the time to consider these things", where many people are focused on meeting their basic needs. Ó Nualláin spoke of the Lucas plan where in 1976 environmentalists and workers worked together to come up with a new model for the business. There is a [film](#) documenting this and a [new Lucas plan](#) being developed in the UK.

Ó Nualláin argued that the just transition cannot be a "purely commercial matter"; not all socially useful activities are profitable and not all profitable activities are socially useful. He stated that we must question the logic of the market, where only a product with a market has value, and challenge the private sector, noting that we need to have a say in what we produce and what we produce them for. Ó Nualláin also introduced the idea of a [jobs guarantee](#) and spoke of the need for the state to provide socially useful forms of employment, referencing [Reclaiming the State](#) by Williams and Fazi.



"Yes, the planet got destroyed. But for a beautiful moment in time we created a lot of value for shareholders."

"This cartoon used to be a joke, now it's a plan" – Stiofán Ó Nualláin

Ó Nualláin also outlined the key elements of a "green new deal":

1. Decarbonisation of the economy.
2. The democratisation of finance and state-led investment, and the directing of finance towards green projects.
3. Building public affluence in place of private wealth.
4. Land reform and ownership – here he referenced a recent Open Democracy report which showed that 50% of land in UK is owned by 1% of population.
5. A just transition and green industrial revolution.

Next, **Seán McCabe** from Thinktank for Action on Social Change (TASC) spoke of their work on just transition, which looks at the societal conditions necessary to enable a successful transition. His work has focused on agriculture in Ireland, and he has just completed a month-long research trip around rural Ireland.

He highlighted that farmers and their families are at the frontlines of climate change, and that farming is also the sector with the highest level of income inequality in Ireland. He found that farmers are facing a variety of challenges; they are taking on huge debt to increase herd size, and have assets but no cash flow and thus no ability to take on workers. This means that any additional work due to increased herd size is done by the family. He warned of potentially catastrophic levels of negative equity if there is a fall in milk price, and highlighted mental health issues among farmers. McCabe also noted that farmers feel under attack from environmentalists and there is hostility to talking about climate change.

McCabe suggested that a key factor impacting the sector is cheap food, with consumers who are cash poor and time poor shopping in low-price supermarkets. He argued that "these retailers are extracting wealth from both the communities they are based in and the producers who supply them" and that the "centralisation of power" through large creameries and abattoirs has taken from farmers the ability to negotiate a price for their product. He stated that policies such as a living wage, a four-day work week and the right to housing are essential to give people the ability to feed and cook for themselves.

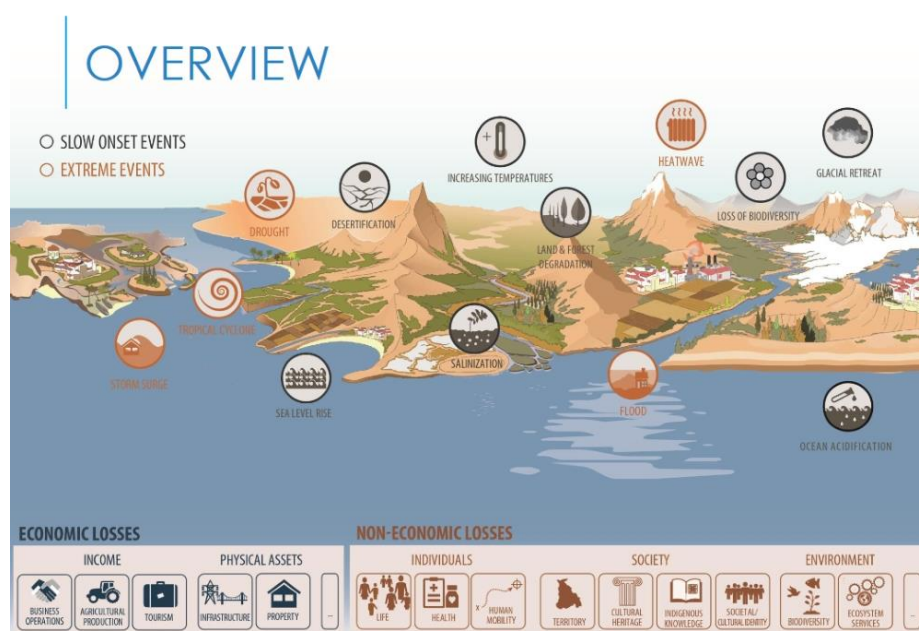
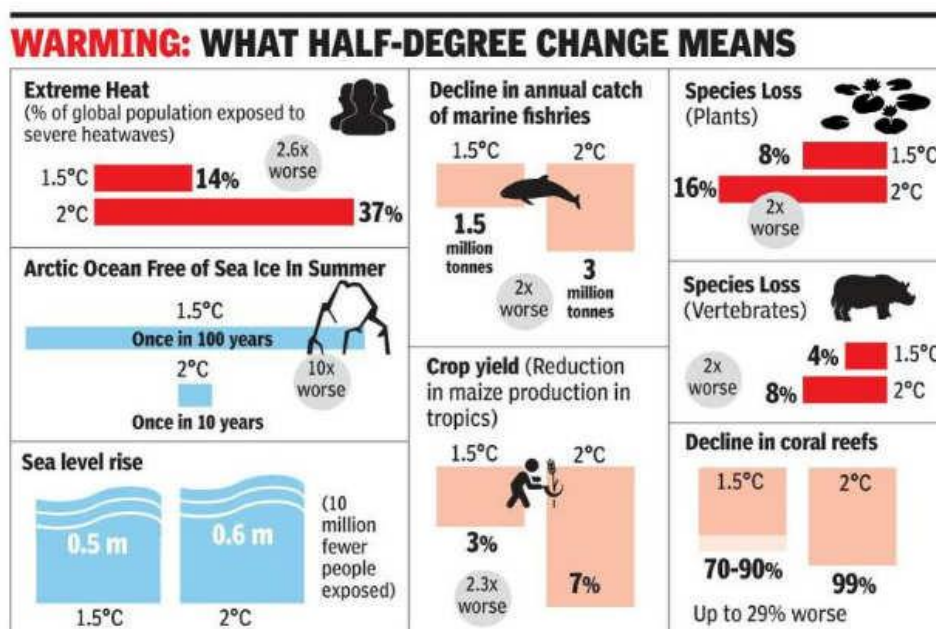
McCabe had two suggestions for further work which can help us to understand a just transition in the agriculture sector.

- The first was listening – he stressed that:
"we need to match community priorities to climate action, we cannot force projects on communities, we need to get the support and build from there"
- The second was the appropriate spending of climate finance. He argued that we now have the opportunity to use climate action as a tool of development and to build community wealth, and to fight back against the wealth extraction that's happening through large multinationals. He suggested that finance is used to stimulate co-operatives, which in turn pay their members a living wage and provide jobs.

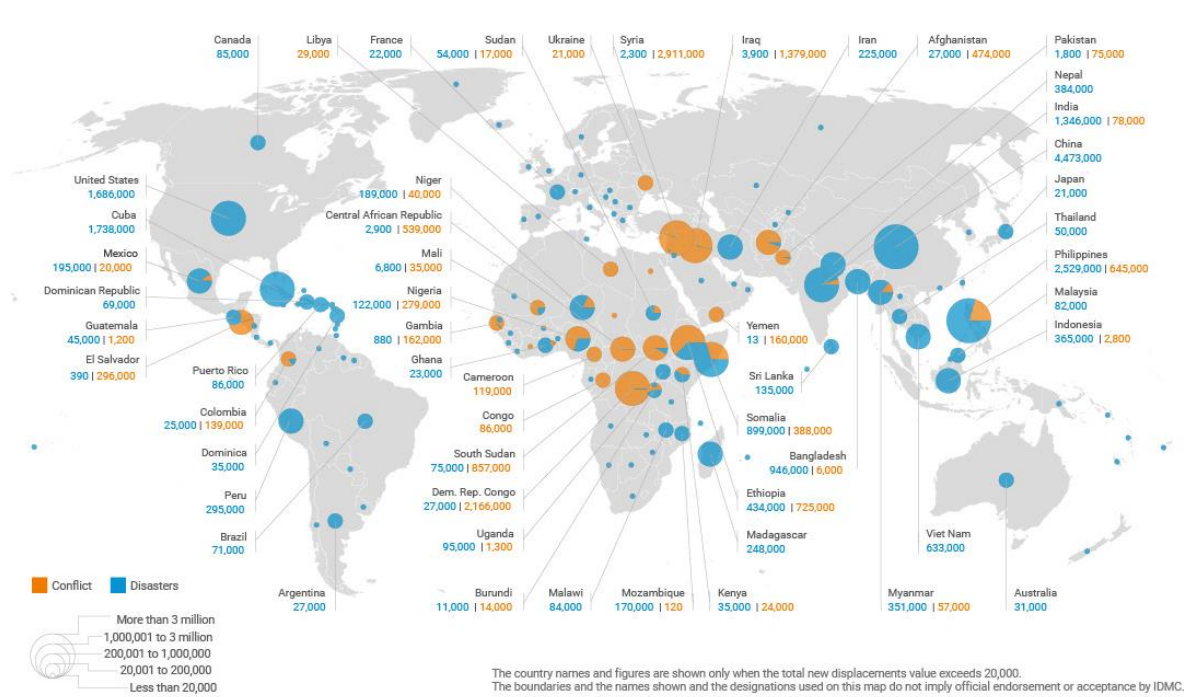
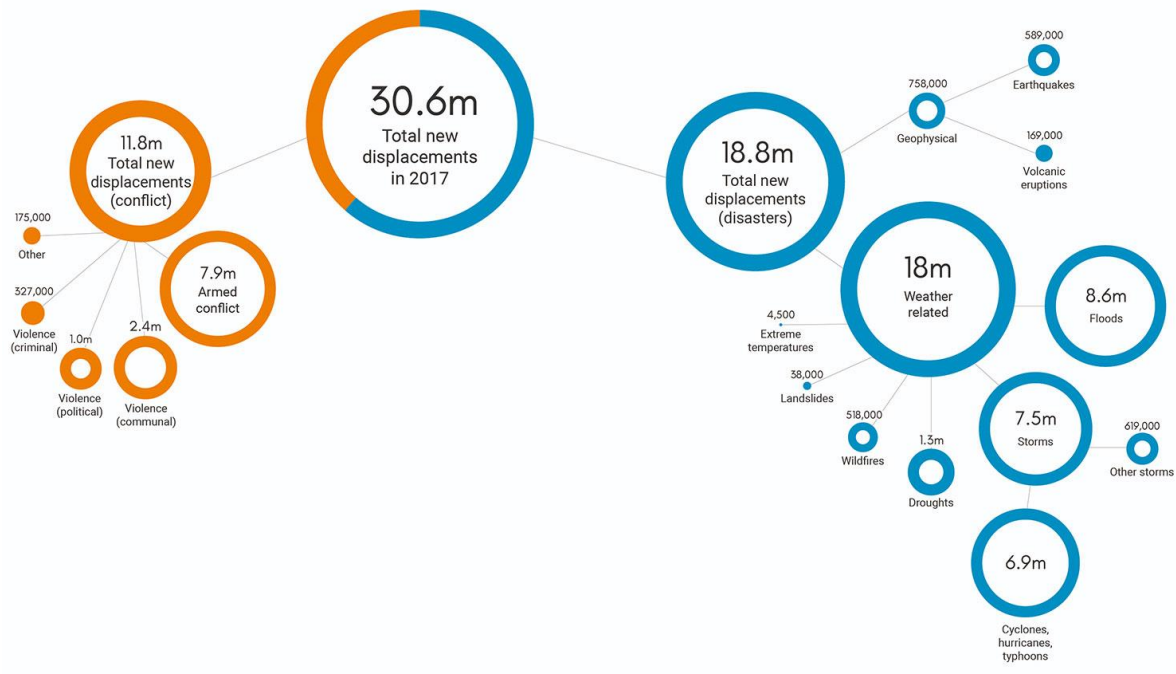
Asad Rehman, War on Want

The day's keynote speech was given by **Asad Rehman** of War on Want, which he described as a charity "rooted in the labour movement". He argued that we need a Global Deal for People rather than a Green New Deal for the Global North, encompassing a "deeper and broader just(ice) transition".

Rehman began by outlining the loss and damages associated with climate change from a climate justice perspective, taking us through the two images below. He warned that the 2018 IPCC report is the "lowest common denominator" and that warming may be happening three times faster than the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) suggests.



Rehman highlighted the displacement which has happened already due to climate change, referring to the UN Special Rapporteur Philip Alston's [comments](#) that we are risking a climate apartheid. Discussing this image below from the [Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre \(IDMC\)](#) displacement report, he noted that "only the people on the left are protected" by international law. He also discussed the second image below, which shows where displacement is happening.



"The Global North are on the deck of the Titanic, and they're still sipping cocktails and listening to the orchestra. The hold of the Titanic is where the Global South are, and they're already drowning"

Rehman stressed that when it comes to climate action "our starting point is an unequal world". He noted that there are currently 3.3 billion people without energy and 3.5 billion people living on less than €5 per day. For the poorest 50% of the world, their income is going up by only 2c a year. He quoted the popular slogan of the French Gilet Jaunes movement: "the elite worry about the end of the world, the rest of us worry about the end of the month".

He posed the following questions to encourage us to think about just transition within a system change framework:

- A Just Transition for who?
- A Just Transition rooted in what reality? e.g. Global North or Global South?
- A Just Transition financed by what?
- A Just Transition built on what resource extraction? e.g. Global South again?
- Who are we taking power from?
- Who are we building power with?

Rahmen cautioned that we cannot just "green our economy", we have to think about the resources and the material extraction that will be needed. He noted that a third of all the shares on the FTSE100 are still from the extractive industry.

He suggested that we need to build our collective power and create a movement of movements incorporating the following elements:

- Vision that we believe in – we need to describe the world that we want.
- Overarching story – "this is not just about climate change and it is not just our children. What about the people who are already dying?" We also need to recognise that "our struggle is part of a much larger struggle".
- Popular demands that connect with people.
- Policy demands behind the popular demands.

He then outlined the essential elements of what could be the Global People's Demands/ Global Green New Deal:

- The fight for the commons: right to food, land, energy, water.
- A global living wage and access to income – workers' rights through the supply chain.
- Universal public services: health, education and housing.
- Fair share of global effort – emissions.

He noted that Universal Declaration of Human Rights guaranteed the first three of these 70 years ago, and asked "what's happened to us since then that we've forgotten these?"

Rehman closed by outlining the system changes which would need to happen to support the Global People's Demands, identifying three key elements:

- Make global finance and trade work for us.
- Migration: the right to move and the right not to move.
- End global debt.

Fuelling the Just Transition – the Role of Non-Carbon Energy

The final session of the day began with a presentation by **Juliana Early** of Queen's University Belfast who spoke on energy in the transport sector. She discussed the 2018 UK government report [Road to Zero](#), which will be followed by a Transport Decarbonisation Plan in 2020. She stressed the importance of "developing technology for societal needs" and spoke of the infrastructure and technological changes required for decarbonisation.

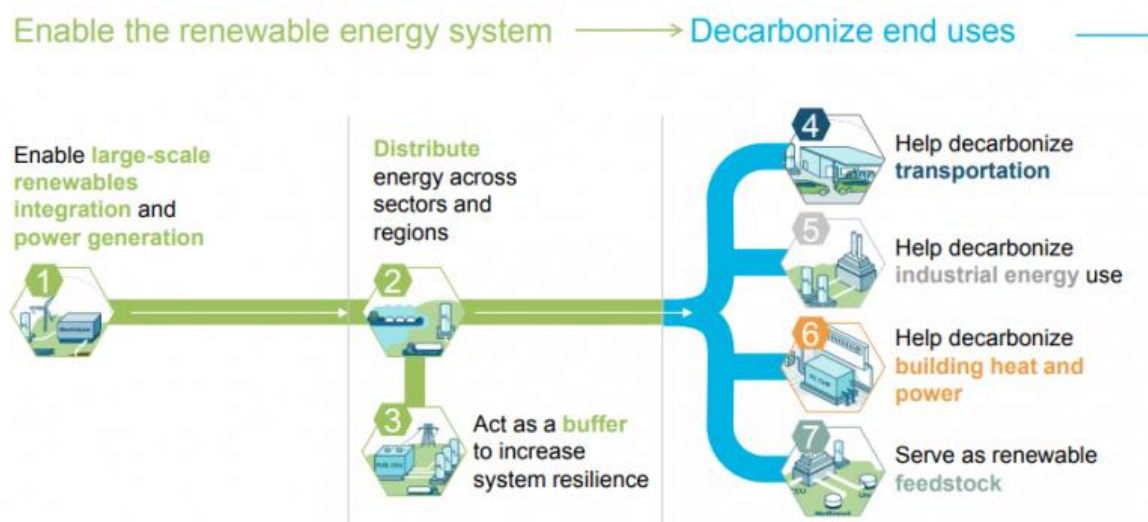
She also highlighted the gaps between current policies and the needs of society. She stressed the need for dialogue with communities to decide if new technologies, for example, hydrogen electrolyzers, are the right solution. She also raised climate justice concerns in relation to mineral extraction in Latin America, for example, [here](#) and the [Congo](#) (see [here](#) also).

Paul McCormack of Belfast Metropolitan College spoke about the [GenComm](#) project, which looks at hydrogen energy and involves several third level institutions, energy co-operatives and local councils. He framed his work within the "4th industrial revolution", where the relationship between science and industry is characterised by wider community inclusion in the collaboration, so people are not left behind.

He gave several examples of how hydrogen technology is evolving and beginning to come into mainstream energy provision, such as [hydrogen buses in Ballymena](#) and GenComm's work with Rathlin and [Valentia](#) Islands.

McCormack suggested that hydrogen can help to increase the uptake of local renewable energy sources by communities and provide energy security for remote communities. He also noted the investment in hydrogen by large companies such as [Energia](#) and [Shell](#). He used the image below to explain how hydrogen can help the energy transition.

Exhibit 3: Hydrogen can play 7 roles in the energy transition



Andy Gouldson from the University of Leeds was the final speaker of the day. He began by asking if we, as the climate community, have a "social licence" to take the rapid actions necessary for decarbonisation. He stressed that we don't, we're still in the minority: "we need to build this social licence, or we will get a certain way down the line and then we get social kickback".

He also stressed that "transition needs to be done by us, not to us". He spoke of the sectors of society threatened by the transition, for example, unions representing oil and gas sectors. At Leeds University researchers have been assessing how many jobs are at risk, and how many jobs might benefit, calculating that about 10% will see demand for their skills go up, and 10% will see demand for their skills go down.

Gouldson cited the [Citizens Jury](#) project, which is nearing completion in Leeds, as an example of working together for the transition; it was done "by the city for the city". He noted that the organisers were concerned that "people would come back and say they don't want this, but they are largely fully signed up to this, because there is a positive vision of a better Leeds in front of them", an appropriate end to a day whose key theme was public participation in the just transition.

AIDEEN O'DOCHARTAIGH
on behalf of Green Foundation Ireland

20 November 2019

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*Green Foundation Ireland is extremely grateful to her
for undertaking to draw up this report for us.*