

Hello, thank you so much for joining us today at Civil Service Live. I hope you've been enjoying the sessions you've been to, and really good to have you at this one on a clean, green resilient recovery. Now COVID-19 had a huge impact on all of our lives in many different ways. But it's right that we seek to learn from it even while we're still managing it. And there are lots of lessons that we can start to learn but in the context of this session, I wanted to pick out two. The first is that it's definitely given us a greater shared understanding of the impact of climate change and biodiversity loss. And why do I say that? Because we've now experienced something together which is global, like climate change, biodiversity loss, which respects nobody borders and has got big economic and health impacts and appears to have at its source man meddling with nature. The secondary lesson is that there's a real appetite for a restart. We've rediscovered our green spaces, we've experienced the air with less traffic fumes we found digital alternatives to international business. And we need to rebuild the economy. But there is an appetite to build that better and greener. So today, that's what we wanted to explore. We want to know, how do we really build a green recovery that the Prime Minister, the chancellor, international leaders have talked about, and at its heart, we know it requires partnership, national government needs to work internationally. And some of you might have been on the last session that was looking at COP 26, the big international climate change conference that we are hosting next year, but we also need to work with local government. We have to work with business. We've got to bring public and private finance together. We have to work directly with citizens. So we brought together a really great panel to have that conversation. And you'll have an opportunity to ask questions too. So let me introduce you to the panel. So on our panel, we've got Deborah Cadman. Deborah is the chief executive of the West Midlands combined authority, but with a lot of wider experience of local government as well as a real understanding of place. Liv Garfield is the chief executive of Seven Trent Water, and also the CEO of the Council for sustainable business that brings business together and helps advise government around sustainability. Emma Howard Boyd is the chair of the Environment Agency. Jeremy Pocklington is the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government. And Richard Walker is the managing director of Iceland foods. So a fantastic panel and I will start off by getting each of them to speak and asking them one question to start, which is to ask them what the changes they think are most important to delivering a green recovery. I'm going to start with Liv Garfield, Liv.

Brilliant. Now I've got about 303 pet projects, but I'm slightly scared that Tamara might mute me with her powers as the chair of this panel. So I'm going to instead go for literally focus on three cultural changes. So when I think about the types of things we want to do to get eco recovery, we could begin to go into it's planting millions of trees, it's getting more green gas through, electric vehicles, it's cultural, corporate reform maybe, the mobility of rivers, it might be flood defences, all of those are amazing, so if any of my fellow panellists now choose those, I'm in on all of them, but I think culturally is now the biggest single thing for us to work on. So three asks for everybody on the call, myself included. So number one, is business and government have both got to begin to see that actually, Green resilience is a way of creating economic growth, not intention to economic growth. And that requires a cultural change. Often I sit in meetings, people say, oh, it'll cost me this or I've got to put money into it. Actually, we've got to think differently, and find ways where actually the green resilience is part of the answer. That's the first total mindset change we got to go through, is we only have a feature economically, if we have a green feature. That's number one, cultural change. Number two, is this crisis is shown as one thing and nothing else, then you have to suddenly take big calls and be brave. So I'd love us to keep

that bravery, that courage and say, culturally, we're going to try bigger braver things and just take bigger braver risks. So who thought you could get your entire contact centres homework in 12 hours? Turns out you can, right? So that sense of it is different. So be bigger be braver. And the third thing I think we need to really get economic recovery of a green nature is and we're gonna have to break down artificial barriers. Often I hear business people say government can't be fleet of foot. There are brilliant examples on government and there are amazing examples when government moves amazingly quickly, like furlough, that is a fantastic example of speed. So we need to breakdown that artificial barrier. Often the reason it isn't fleet of foot is it doesn't believe that it needs to be fleet of foot. So we need to do a better job in business persuading why, please if it would help, likewise, often a government say, or business wouldn't go for it, it doesn't care. It just cares about profits. I don't know many, to be fair, it might be 20% of the FTSE 100 that care solely about profits. That means there's 80% that patently want a generally better planet. So I think again, change that mindset is important. We can always think of the negative, let's break down artificial barriers, and agree that success will only come if we work together. There is no way of delivering a greener future individually. So I'd love those as my three asks as we behave differently as a nation going forward.

Fantastic, thank you Liv, a real call to be brave. So with that, let me go to Emma Howard Boyd.

Thank you. Thank you, Tamara, and really great to be joining this panel. And I think the comments that I thought about and prepared really, hopefully nicely lead from where Live has left us. And I think partly that comes from working together with others on the panel on the council for sustainable business where we really have been looking at the 25 year environment plan, which whilst it was launched by the Department of Environment is all about putting environmental issues into the hearts of decision making, not just government, the whole of the country. So that when it comes to environmental issues and climate change, in particular, to stop thinking in separate boxes, so we have a lot of attention on net zero, yesterday was a brilliant day for Defra, brilliant day for the Environment Agency, but arguably a brilliant day for this country, because we launched lots of great initiatives focused on flood, we need to be thinking of our net zero commitments in line with our adaptation and resilience commitments preparing for the shocks of climate change. At the same time as thinking about nature recovery. There is something huge about pace, but also knowing when to close down on a project because we've given it our best effort. And we know it's not going to deliver on what we know now needs to happen. So again, working in sprints, which will allow us to pilot things and then either allow those pilots to flourish or allow them to wither again at pace so that we can move on to the next best idea. And then collaboration, absolutely key but taking the best of the private, the public and the third sector, and making sure that we're operating not just at the global level, but absolutely at the local level and working with communities and the communities that we want to represent. That we're coming up with these solutions in consultation with them. Thank you.

Thanks, Emma. And next we go to Jeremy Pocklington.

Thanks Tamara, hard to hard to top those two. I love the idea that we need to be brave. We certainly do because the challenge that we've got is enormous. So emissions have reduced by 43% since 1990. Our ambition is to reduce them by 100% by 2050 to meet our net zero ambition, and we've done the easy stuff. Structural change in the economy, the end of heavy industry, taking coal off the power

system. That's the easy stuff. We've got the hard stuff to go. So we do need to be brave and capture the moment and the opportunity created by the recovery from Coronavirus. If we're going to meet that, that ambition. I want to highlight two things that I think we do well. And two things that I think we need to do more of if we're going to meet that ambition. Two things that I think we do well but need to keep building on, first of all investing in all the opportunities provided by green technology. This government's put low carbon innovation and technology at the heart of its plans to double R&D spending by 2024. There are huge opportunities for us in zero carbon technologies, new power generation, wind energy, electric vehicles we need to capitalise on. Secondly, as we are doing, we need to continue to provide fiscal stimulus packages to encourage the green recovery, whether that's through my department and things like the town fund, through great work going on in BEIS at the moment for the Green Homes Grant, 2 billion pounds that the Chancellor announced a week or so ago. Fantastic opportunity to create green jobs, tackling unemployment, improving the sustainability of the economy. Two things that I think we need to do more of, first of all work together and think through some of the behavioural changes that we need to see. And some of the different changes in consumer behaviour that are going to be important in the coming years. So I deal a lot with housing. We need to be building houses that have different forms of heating systems and heat pumps, we need to get better at working with consumers to think what is going to make those sorts of new technologies acceptable. And the second thing that I think we need to do, I would say this to my department, I think we need to build a strong relationship between central government and local government on this issue. We have not worked closely enough together on this. Lots of things we do work well on but building a green recovery has not yet been one of those that we need to do. We've started that with some of our recent announcements, but there's a lot further to go.

Thanks, Jeremy. And it's a perfect segue for me to bring in Deborah Cadman.

Thank you very much. Thanks, panel members, and thanks for the audience for the invitation. So what I've got to say hopefully complements those that have spoken before me. But I just think we need to just stop and reflect on the fact that COVID-19 for all its horrible impact has given us a real opportunity to start to reevaluate how we live, work and travel. And that's, that's what we're doing at a regional level in the West Midlands, but also at a local level with our local government partners as well. And we have a plan for green recovery, we're absolutely clear that we are responsible for recovering the economy and Liv, thank you. You've been you've been part of that and helping us engage with some of our businesses. But actually, we're also absolutely clear we've got to plan for a green recovery as well and a sustainable recovery and keeping insight are 2041 net zero carbon emissions trajectory. So there are a couple of principles that we have been talking about in the West Midlands. And the first one is that a low carbon transition must be a just transition, because if one of the things that COVID-19 has shone a spotlight on is that the, the exposure and impact of COVID has not been equal across our communities. So, so there are parts of our communities both that have impact level but also just receiving exposure where it's where it's unequal. So we we have the opportunity to put right a number of wrongs that we're seeing across the region. And we also want to make sure that whatever we do, has a kind of accelerator effect. And what I mean by that is Jeremy mentioned housing. So what one of our big projects that we we are in discussion with government about is a regional retrofit scheme for our housing stock. Now, the West Midlands has the highest fuel poverty gap in the country due to its higher than average age of housing stock. Now, that's a real challenge for us. But we believe that we can, we

can almost kill three birds with one stone, which is very efficient of us. But by investing in retrofitting, we're also investing in the skills that we need. We're also investing in in tech startups to ensure a proper and appropriate supply chain. So we're looking at Green recovery in the round, not just community recovery, but also economic recovery and environmental recovery as well. We've also found that green space and natural capital has played a much more fundamental role in ensuring people's mental health and well being throughout the crisis. So 53% of people that we polled in in the region are saying that they really appreciate green spaces more 63% want us to protect green spaces. In the future, and and it would be remiss of us if we ignored that. So we are absolutely factoring that into our green recovery plan. So we are actually Liv talking about a virtual forest, creating a virtual forest across the region. We are developing a West Midlands National Park and tomorrow we want we want to very much engage you in that. And you'll know that recently the Black Country has just been identified as a geo Park. So we wanted to kind of build on that but do it in a way in which local people and businesses feel they have a role to play in that. We're also absolutely clear that we need to also adapt to climate change as well as mitigating It doesn't matter how fast we move on the mitigation with the impacts of climate change or some of the impacts of climate change are still with us. So we have to focus on how we adapt to that as well. And we also have to in the West Midlands we are absolutely focused on mitigating the impact that some of the challenges around climate change are happening to those who are most affected and vulnerable in our communities.

The other thing I would just like to say before I, I finish, and it's aligned with a number of the comments made previously is that I do think we've got an opportunity now to join up the dots. And what I mean by that is that certainly in the West Midlands, we are being very clear about what we think we need to do in order to achieve zero carbon emissions by 2041, which is our target year. And, and there's a there's a picture that we've made up and it's - this is a very kind of naughty version, which I've just pulled together. You can't see it, but it's a jigsaw. And in that jigsaw you know, the the pieces there are about 20 pieces that make up the jigsaw. And for each of those pieces of the jigsaw is an issue. So one is about retrofitting. One is about low. One is about electric charging infrastructure strategy. One is around green and electric vehicles, etc, etc. All of those make up that picture of zero carbon emissions by 2041. Now, if you take each of those pieces of the jigsaw, you can align a partner, a central government department, a local authority, a member of the community, you know, everyone has a role to play. So I can't remember who talks about the need for collaboration, community engagement, people working together for the same aim. And I think if you asked me what one thing do I want, as the result of this, it is people being prepared to join up the dots and see this as all of our problem, and therefore our response has to be collaborative and joined up. Thank you.

Thank you so much. And now for our our final bit of the jigsaw, I'm going to go to Richard Walker from Iceland foods.

Good afternoon and thanks for having me. And I mean, I totally agree in terms of the opportunities that we've all witnessed to harness a green recovery, of course. And I think we're all mindful of what those opportunities are. However, what's interesting from our perspective as Iceland is that we do operate in some of the most deprived communities around the UK. And therefore I'm very conscious that for our customer price will always be the primary consideration. And therefore, for any recovery, hopefully a green one, to be truly scalable and truly impactful, we've got to find cost neutral solutions to the end

consumer, however we do it so that you know, that's always the the prism and how I look at these issues, in terms of the three things that I would be focusing on. Well, the first one has already been done, actually, which is to recognise retail workers as key workers. And I think, you know, if nothing else, this crisis in my industry has shown that the UK high streets are absolutely essential to the national infrastructure and the fabric of the UK. But my second point is related to that. And I think that high street recovery needs to be reflected in government policy better. And first and foremost, i'd make our high streets places where people want to live, as well as work, and therefore freeing up the planning system, potentially changing the taxation system so that there's easier conversion of empty retail units into residential for example, where younger people who potentially don't want a car and let's you know, reinvest in our high streets to make them thriving communities once again, because it should, all of us should care about health and vitality of our high streets, not only for the jobs that contain there, but also because they are the communities of the UK and we're on 1000 high streets up and down the UK. So their longevity is important to us as anyone else. The final thing is business rates, which the government have obviously given a 12 month holiday on through the crisis, which has been very welcomed and has meant that we've been properly able to invest in PPE and safety measures for our staff and customers. However, I think that has shone a light on what's broken in our system. And we need a taxation system that catches up with the modern digital economy. And therefore, you know, I'd like to see as an alternative form of online sales tax, and I say that as an online retailer, that now there's more home deliveries a week than Ocado. We have an enormous online business and but it's it's just a reality that the current bricks and mortar taxation system in the name of business rates is outdated, and deliberately targets bricks and mortar retailers as opposed to digital. Thank you.

Richard thank you. Thank you very much. Thanks to all the panelists. Some strong themes coming through. Nobody is short on bravery and ambition. I think all looking for collaboration. An interesting thing which has got to come up with the questions that I see are coming through around seeing green resillience not being intention with economic growth, and also a call for ensuring that we are talking about adaptation as well as mitigation of emissions. So, lots and lots of interesting themes coming out. Let me turn some of the questions that our audience are asking. And the first one is how can we be truly green, clean and resilient if we continue to be a consumer culture with endless economic growth and use of resources. And I'm wondering Liv if I can start with you, then might bring Richard in on that as well, if that's okay.

I think it's fair there's no right. So I think that's exactly the point isn't it is that it's felt a little bit like, we had two amazing things, we had this thing called away, and you just threw things away. And apparently that was fine. There was no issue with that. And we've kind of believed we have endless, endless energy, endless stuff, endless water there's been this whole sense of the last period of time. And we've always convinced ourselves that we live in a nation which is 13 degrees and drizzles every single day. And I think what this has taught all of us is actually the world has changed. I say in turning to my business that we've got, you know, four years to work out how everything which currently we throw away becomes something so there is no way anymore and that's the phrase we use endlessly. And that means ammonia has got to become something, hydrogen has got become something, things that go to landfill have to become something, that's the first sense of where leadership is going to go. And the second thing is that if you choose to use something I get reminded of that Patagonia story. The guy who founded Patagonia lives to sell jackets, but then his Christmas campaign five years ago, was a

massive billboard everywhere across the states. It says please don't buy this jacket. And the whole point is, however, renewably energy positive he runs his company, if you buy the jacket, even though it's recycled cotton, it's like, you know, it's brilliant. It's still unfortunately, it still uses stuff. So his point was, if you want to love and breathe this jacket, and wear it every day, buy my jacket. If you don't, I'd rather you didn't buy it and use your old jacket. And that's the kind of sense of organising into as leaders, we've got to set that mindset internally of circular economy, which I hate as a phrase. So I use the no away. But at the same time as consumers, we could also go over how much we used to buy before COVID and how much we now buy and all of us have spent a lot less money because we didn't need everything we were buying. So I mean, I still buy deodorant, it turns out I'm rare, Alan from unilever tells me deodorant sales are down by two thirds. So there's still an element of we should think about personal hygiene. But I think this sense of what is consumerism, I'm 100% in with the person who asked the question, we've all got to change our mindset as consumers, as business leaders and as government policy setters

Thanks Live, Rich, I'd love to hear your perspective on this.

Yeah, well, I'm going to be the cynical retailer now because I hugely admire as a fellow surfer Yvon Chouinard, the founder of Patagonia. But the reality on that brilliant campaign was he sold more jackets than he ever had done because of that ad. But no, Liv is exactly right. How heavily we tread on this planet is has become all too clear through the pandemic. And of course, as a business, it's incumbent that we do everything we can to understand our footprint, and then seek to minimise it. And that's what we've been doing removing palm oil, with our pledge to fully eliminate plastic. We announced a 23% reduction in food waste over the last two years. And actually today we've just announced a 73% reduction in carbon over the last nine years. So we are making good progress and I say that as a mass market high volume food retailer that is not sustainable. You know, we're not putting back more into nature than we take out of this. And but then, of course, it's it's not just the business and the retailers, responsibility. It's also the consumers as Liv said, and we are seeing some interesting trends, sales of frozen food have gone up 30% through the pandemic as people want to plan ahead, and they're very mindful and cognisant of their food waste as well. So, look, we you know, I hope that that is taught us a few things, and hopefully as well as speeding up some of the trends that I was talking about earlier around High Street decline. I hope it's sped up some trends as well around trying to be a bit more circular in our our thinking and not so distracted.

Thank you. I think Emma wants to come in on this one. I've got like going on to the next Emma. Did you want to add something? Yes,

thank you very, very quickly, because we have some huge opportunities right now with the environment bill, with the agriculture bill, to really make the most of reframing the way that we are. We as policymakers and regulators are working with business and other parts of this huge collaborative network. And I think this is where piloting comes in. And I think there's some great pilots that we're already experimenting with around environmental land management. But we need to make the most of this moment to really build in the best, take some risks around policy and regulation, but also knowing that we can cut things back if they're not working in the right way. Thank you.

Thank you. There's a little bundle of questions I might aim at Jeremy and then bring in Deborah. So one of the questions was, how do you resolve competing issues of building with a green recovery and can building ever really be seen as green? linked to that someone else has asked, given the government's commitment to build 25,000 new homes, what's being done to ensure that they're green? And a very reasonable question was what is retrofitting? So that's what

I'm going to go to Jeremy, and then i'll come to Deborah,

Thanks, Tamara. Great, great questions. And I can sort of completely understand the sentiment behind it. Of course, building any building uses natural resources and requires energy to build. But I think we do have to move to a world and a society where the new buildings that we're building to start with that and the new homes that we're building really are sustainable. That's what the government is trying to do with something called the future homes standard, which is going to reduce the amount of carbon that's emitted from new homes by 80%, compared to what it was a couple of years, a couple of years ago and that's that will be a terrific step forward that we will see over this decade, it'll save on energy bills. And it will, it will, it will also enable us to introduce new types of sort of heating systems that use electricity rather than gas and therefore, take carbon out of our our heating system. So a fantastic change that we're making there. We do need to build these homes there are about a million households that we call them hidden households. They mean either overcrowded accommodation that people that want homes that can't yet afford homes. So we talked earlier about the recovery being a just and a fair recovery. We do need to build homes, if we're going to if we're going to do that. That also helps answer the question about building all the new homes we need to make sure they're at a higher a higher energy performance standard than the homes of the past. What's retrofitting? Great question. I'm not an expert on this, but retrofitting is essentially the actions that you can take to improve existing homes. In general homes and throughout the UK are not of great quality compared to a lot of homes in other countries, particularly, particularly in in, in Europe. And by insulation of loft insulation is the very best thing to do. The cheapest has the best effect. But then cavity wall insulation, or something called solid wall insulation, which is where you attach undulation either to the outside of a wall, the external wall or the inside the internal wall and can really improve the energy performance of the home as can changing the windows double glazing or changing the heating system to a more efficient boiler can make a really, really big difference to the home. And actually what is most cost effective is what's called a whole house retrofit, which is where you do all these things at once for a home or even better a street of homes. If that's if that's possible. And that can be a really efficient way to improve energy performance and lower energy bills.

Thanks, Jeremy. Deborah you're up next.

So I'm really excited by this. So yes, you can build homes that are not carbon neutral but low carbon homes. And there is an open invitation to anybody on this panel or in this event, if you want to visit the West Midlands, and we will share with you the work that we've done to achieve low carbon homes through modern methods of construction. We have the most brilliant people advising us George Clark has been absolutely brilliant. He's really passionate about about this, this area, and aligned to lives call to action and be bold and brave. I want to be hugely brave. And I am encouraging the mayor to be hugely brave and we can we can be really targeted at some of our developers who want to come and

invest and build homes in the region. And we can say through the planning system, you can only build in this region, if you are prepared to build low carbon homes. If you're not prepared to build low carbon homes, then I'm not going to say go to Manchester, because I'll be pilloried for saying that, but go to elsewhere in this country, because actually, for the West Midlands, we want to be known as the place that is absolutely committed to building a green economy and a green environment. And as part of that is, is your you've been prepared to come and work with us and build low carbon homes and sustainable communities. I think that's the other issue that we're also talking about. You can't just build housing units. We've got the opportunity to build communities that are beautiful, environmentally sustainable and healthy. So it's the whole package that we are focused on delivering in the West Midlands and retrofitting. I mean, I can't add a lot to the technical description that Jeremy has shared with you. But what I would say is that to again repeat that, for us it's not just retrofitting it's West Midlands retrofitting, which is also take advantage of skilling up our people. And certainly all those young people who are going to be doubly disadvantaged coming out of COVID and unemployed. Let's start encouraging them to be skilled up in plumbing for example, so they can work with us to, you know, to change

agency is very place based. And that comes about through our roles as working on our flood agenda, but also through our environmental regulatory agenda. And one of the ways that we have worked best at the local level, particularly around some of these developments is by getting in early and shaping things in collaboration with local government, right at the start, so whether we're coming in from an environmental permitting perspective, or indeed from a flood resilience perspective, we are helping local government , we're helping local government get in businesses, embed some of the environmental standards that we regulate, right at the start of these projects. We're also part of Local resilience forums because of our role in Incident Management, whether it is through water related incidents or waste related environmental pollution incidents. So again, I think we have proved, I think, quite helpful to our department in joining up those dots because of that very local presence. And I think other departments equally Jeremy in your department, you've got a number of arm's length bodies too that operate at the local level, using that flow through from the department to the arm's length body and out to colleagues at the local government level is a very effective way that I believe we're now working with our department, and that sort of join up can help. But I think partnership is absolutely key and getting in early and if we're really at the start of a decade of difference and a decade of delivery around our climate change challenges. We need to work in these new and exciting ways and consistently, because whilst we're doing it in some parts of the country, we're possibly not doing it every part of the country or every local government just because of resourcing. So something we can all work on. Thank you.

Thanks. Liv how do you see it? How well do we work, nationally and then in a place of collaboration? What's your perspective?

So I think there are two analogies I'd use here. So, I've got two boys and I'm one of three children, I often think the sibling setup is quite an interesting dynamic in any family situation. And you often have the oldest sibling, which is a bit louder, a bit noisier, a bit, kind of the leader, and the younger sibling who's wilier, can often be quieter, but actually is probably I reckon, controlling the situation, in some sense. And I think of this sometimes as being when we think about things that are big on the government agenda carbon has become big. So government has an amazing partner on carbon,

because it's the big brother on it, it's kind of decided it's on his list, and then makes it very powerful and very easy to do business with. So when something becomes firmly in the government's agenda, actually, I think it's very good. I can imagine the government business partnership on Carbon over the next few years, I'm sure will work amazingly on electric fleets, we're going to see charging infrastructure everywhere, we'll see some amazing things done in terms of high renewable energies, that's all good. The trouble that we have is when it's a smaller sibling, and biodiversity is your classic example of a smaller sibling. It's kind of like the quieter wall, it's tucked away, it's probably 10 times cooler the carbon but somehow doesn't get the air time it doesn't get the space, it doesn't breathe as much, then you are a nightmare to be fair, when you want to work with the smaller sibling style activities because you've got to work rounds the system in a sense to get enough like minded people, and in a government and you are made up of genuinely massively talented people, i'm consistently impressed with the civil servants, I think I'd love to poach loads of people. And so that is great, but you've got to find them. And so some businesses, they're so passionate about the topic. It's worth still finding the siblings and bringing it together, some businesses just look at and say it's not worth the hassle, right? They lose the energy on the journey. And so I look at it and say biodiversity is a bit like that. I genuinely think biodiversity is the single most important topic the business government can work on together for the next few years. I've seen all the comments coming through on the various chats and whenever there's a sense of cynicism isn't about a people got to be fair. They've got homes how can we be talking about nature, but I think it feeds at all. I think it creates jobs, I think it creates Better Homes and it creates a nice environment to live in. You get away from the rich that live in the nice double detached houses and we live in these flats with no outside space. I think it changes this whole dynamic of living and working and breathing. But you're harder to work with on those smaller, fresher topics. And that's the dynamic we've got to keep working on is how to make it easier on the smaller sibling topics.

That's great. Thank you. I don't know if Debra or Joe, if you want to come in at all on the on the local national mayors and elects. Do you want me to start Jeremy and then you can come in. So, um, so I'm going to look at it through a different end of the telescope, really and just say, you know, you know, reflecting back on on the COVID crisis, you know, what has that taught us? And I think if, you know, God forbid, we won't, have to deal with this again. But if if we do, I really hope that we will learn from some of the mistakes that we made. And one of the mistakes was that because everybody was so keen to respond, we lost sight of having that really critical conversation about who is best placed to deliver some of this response. So so some of it was held too tightly at the centre. And whereas if we'd have had a conversation about about subsidiarity and who's closer to communities and businesses, you know, we probably would have done it different and I really hope that if we have to respond to a crisis, again, we will just take a little bit of time and say who's who's closest to those that matter most and who therefore should be responsible for delivering so Some of the stuff that needs needs to have an impact. And I think, you know, so I'll talk to you about what we've done in the West Midlands, we we have brought together assistance panel to help us form what our recovery priorities should look like. And I'm really reassured and Emma you should be reassured we should as well and Tamara that the residents in the West Midlands are saying that one of the recovery priorities has to be green recovery. You know, it's it's brought home to us just how important it is for us to mitigate climate change because we've enjoyed an environment without any pollution. And in the centre of Birmingham, for example, that is a big deal for the residents that live in this city. So let's not go back to where we've where we were before where, you know, actual people getting taken into hospital because of chest pains or whatever.

So local people themselves are saying "this is what we want you to do" in terms of recovery. Now it's partly my job. And also, you know, because we've been living and working from home our kind of energy costs have gone through the roof. So we want you to help us, you know, get to a point where our energy costs are minimised. So so I want to have a conversation with with central government to say, okay, this is what the local of what people want, how can we work together better more effectively, to deliver that and sometimes that isn't always from the centre. Brilliant.

Unfortunately, it's totally my fault. I've been too engaged in the conversation. So we're running right low on time. And there's something I wanted to leave our audience with. A couple of questions have asked that which is how as civil servants we educate ourselves on these issues and take actions ourselves. I'm hoping possibly a slide will pop up. It may be that I won't see it if it pops up. So I'm going to assume it is popping up on your screens where you're watching because there are a number of things that you can do, and especially if you've been engaged by this conversation. There are some things called the greening government commitments which are commitments made by departments where we've made progress on the energy we use, on the waste that we put on reducing waste, or reducing our water use. And you could be part both of making that happen in terms of your own personal use of resources, but also in terms of encouraging the next set of greening covenant commitments, which we're developing now are really ambitious. There's an opportunity to have a screening and panel discussion around these issues with a brilliant film called our planet, our business. And if you haven't had one in your department, there's hopefully an email on screen that you can email to get that set up. You can sign your own department's staff charter for sustainability, and if you don't have one on your department, then DEFRA can help you get that going and show you what other departments are doing. And there are a number of environmental networks, lots of Department have developed them themselves. And then there are a couple of cross government ones, one for a collective for climate action, and one the network for nature. And all of those will give you great ideas as to what you can do personally, as part of this partnership to really make a difference, and how you can influence others, both within the civil service within government and well beyond into the areas we've talked about today. So with that, and as I say, I hope you could see that, that slide, which just gives you the email addresses. Thank you so much for joining and a massive thank you to my panel for joining us today. Thank you.

My pleasure. Thank you.