

Greens urge UK government to rule out new fossil fuels in net zero strategy



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The Green Party has warned the UK government that a net zero strategy which offers a boost to fossil fuels would be a “grave betrayal” of its citizens and future generations, amid reports that its planned “green day” this week could include more support for oil and gas [1].

As the government prepares to announce its revamped net zero strategy on Thursday, the Greens have urged Grant Shapps, Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, to choose the policies that will bring the most benefit to households across the UK as well as to the environment.

Green Party co-leader Adrian Ramsay said:

“The government this week has an opportunity to introduce measures that will create a win-win for our environment and the economy at large.

“Instead, we are hearing reports that what should be a boost for households across the country, in the shape of cheaper, cleaner energy and a reduction in emissions, will instead be a boost for the climate-wrecking fossil fuel industry.

“If what we fear is correct, this will be a grave betrayal of households up and down the country who want cheap, clean energy that doesn’t cost the earth, as well as future generations who will wonder why more wasn’t done to tackle the climate crisis when we had the opportunity to do so.”

The Greens have called on the government to:

- Introduce a carbon tax targeting the biggest polluters to provide funding for a mass insulation programme and renewable energy revolution to cut domestic energy bills and reduce emissions
- Invest £25 billion a year for ten years to carry out deep retrofitting of ten million homes and provide insulation improvements for every home

that needs it.

- Invest £12 billion a year for ten years on rolling out renewable energy including:
- Paving the way for 70% of the UK's electricity to come from wind power by lifting the de facto onshore ban and introducing new support and incentives to accelerate wind energy development
- Introducing new support for solar geothermal, tidal, hydro and other renewables to provide much of the rest

1. Make solar panels mandatory on the roofs of all suitable new homes
2. A national programme to replace polluting boilers with renewable heat from heat pumps
3. A commitment to provide no new investment in or permit the development of new fossil fuels

Ramsay said:

"Any claim from the government that burning ever more fossil fuels from the North Sea will help the UK meet its international obligations to become net zero by 2050 [2] has no connection to reality.

"Just last week, the latest IPCC report painted a grim picture of the future of action to tackle the climate crisis isn't taken immediately. [2]

"The UK government, along with governments around the world, has an increasingly small window of opportunity to secure a sustainable future for all and limit global temperature rise.

"But with the recent announcements in the Spring Budget and reports that its own 'green day' has been watered down, this government continues to stick its head in the sand at everybody's cost.

"There are huge benefits to be made if the government puts the right policies in place now. For example, the UK is seriously behind other European countries when it comes to installing heat pumps. However, new research has shown that we could reduce our gas imports by half if we installed them at the same rate as Finland [3]. If the government put the right long-term policy measures in place now, then we could see this sort of reward very soon.

"The government has a chance to achieve a win-win this week, but it looks like they're going for a lose-lose-lose which will be bad for the economy, bad for our pockets and bad for the climate."

Notes

1. <https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2023/mar/24/uk-government-launch-ramped-net-zero-strategy-oil-gas-capital-aberdeen>
2. <https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2023/03/20/green-party-response-to-ipcc-synthesis-report/>

3. <https://eciu.net/media/press-releases/2023/gas-imports-could-be-halved-in-ten-years-if-uk-matched-finland-on-heat-pumps>

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