

BESA backs calls for greater Net Zero urgency

1 year ago



The [Building Engineering Services Association \(BESA\)](#) has echoed the concerns expressed by the UK's Climate Change Committee (CCC) that current economic and energy security concerns could derail progress towards net zero carbon targets. In a show of support for the urgency of net zero, the organisation has also launched a new 'Net Zero Initiative' award.

In its latest report, the Committee said there were still "shocking" policy gaps and "scant evidence of delivery" since the government produced its Net Zero Strategy last year. It praised the intent of the strategy, but said it would not deliver net zero at the current rate of progress.

The government's intention is to achieve a 78% reduction in carbon emissions by 2035 compared to 1990 levels as a first stage on the way to a net zero economy by 2050. However, the CCC reported that the UK was only on track in eight out of 50 key net zero indicators.

"We are worried whether this government, which has made lots of progress over the last 12 months, is going to stay the course," said CCC chief executive Chris Stark. "That was the year of COP26, so we expected progress. The challenge now is to deliver against the objectives that they set for themselves last year, and frankly they are taking a very risky approach."

"An urgent focus on existing buildings – with the government underwriting a huge programme of refurbishments and retrofits – would help get us on track to net zero," said BESA's head of technical Graeme Fox. "This could make a significant dent in the large contribution made by the built environment to emissions – particularly in 'operational' carbon, which would also translate into much lower running costs for building users."

He said that building services engineers, like everyone else in the construction supply chain, should also give more thought to designing with ongoing service and maintenance in mind to minimise long-term carbon – and to consider how materials and system components could be recycled, reused, and more easily replaced as part of planning ahead for refurbishment and repair.

The award is open to any company or individual who can demonstrate their commitment to the UK's target of achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050. This could either be through the delivery of a project with strong net zero credentials, by producing an innovative technology, process or methodology that advances net zero, or a wider initiative such as developing training or addressing corporate culture.

To remind the sector of its important contribution to net zero and the urgency of the task in hand, BESA is also promoting its Net Zero Project of the Year Award, which will be presented as part of the [Industry Awards](#) event in London on October 17th.

Entries may either focus on work for clients or on initiatives taken to embed a net zero culture in the entrant's own company and/or supply chains. The judging panel will be looking for the outcomes of net zero initiatives and evidence of success, innovation in carbon reduction techniques and practices